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INSIDE



New Rover

The rover Opportunity zeroed in on Mars late Saturday night, making its final turn and positioning a heat shield designed to protect it from burning up during a fiery plunge through the planet's atmosphere.

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No Weapons?

Secretary of State Colin Powell held out the possibility Saturday that prewar Iraq may not have possessed weapons of mass destruction. He conceded that the US thought Saddam Hussein had banned weapons but added, "We had questions that need to be answered."

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VIRTUE OF THE WEEK

Assertiveness

"Are not five sparrows sold for two small coins? Yet not one of them has escaped the notice of God. Even the hairs of your head have all been counted. Do not be afraid. You are worth more than many sparrows."

— Luke 12:6-7

See Page 13

PSS teachers among top 20 percent highest paid in US

By LIBERTY DONES
REPORTER



Believe it or not, the CNMI's Public School System's teaching staff are among the top 20 percent highest paid teachers in the United States—before tax. After tax, CNMI

teachers' take home pay is even considered to be on the top 5 five percent.

This was according to PSS finance director Richard Waldo, who reported to the Board of Education Friday that the CNMI is ahead of 29 other U.S. states in terms of highest step on the salary schedule of \$47,001.

The CNMI is also ahead of 37 states

in terms of salary for teachers with master's degrees or those with 20 years experience (\$47,001).

Compared with 50 states, the CNMI's starting



Inos

salary for teachers with a master's degree and no experience—\$30,977—is higher than 38 states.

Compared with all states, the CNMI's starting pay of \$28,884 is higher than 42 states such as North and South Dakota, Montana, Nebraska, Washington, Oregon, Texas, Wisconsin, Nevada, Virginia,

See PSS on Page 8



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

SINGING IN THE NEW YEAR

Students of the Chinese School entertain the evening's audience with a song during the induction ceremony for the new officials of the Chinese Association of Saipan that was held Saturday night at the Dai Ichi Hotel Saipan Beach. Rose Chan assumes her post as the newly elected president of the Chinese Association of Saipan.

Hawaii joins PBDC anew

After seven years out of the organization, Hawaii is rejoining the Pacific Basin Development Council, which CNMI Gov. Juan N. Babauta currently heads as president.

"Hawaii is linked geographically, culturally and economically with our fellow U.S. Pacific Islands, so it's critical that we

work together to foster partnerships that address our common regional concerns," Gov. Linda Lingle said Friday.

Lingle told PBDC leaders of



Lingle

the decision to renew Hawaii's membership during a governors meeting attended by Babauta and Togiola Tulafono, governor of American Samoa. Guam Gov. Felix Camacho could not attend.

"Rejoining the Pacific Basin Development Council will enable Hawaii

See HAWAII on Page 8

AG lawyer pushes ban on oil firms as retailers

By JOHN RAVELO
REPORTER



With the Attorney General's Office's involvement in a nationwide monitoring of fuel prices, the CNMI's consumer lawyer recommended the passage of a

law that would prohibit oil companies here

from owning retail stations. Assistant Attorney General Brian Caldwell said the Legislature should look into introducing a divorcement measure

to better protect consumers from the possibility of price gouging.

He said the existing scenario where oil giants Shell and Mobil could own retail stations is inconsistent with allowing free market competition.

See AG on Page 8

Bennett resigns from TRC

By LIBERTY DONES
REPORTER

Newly elected teacher representative for public schools Ambrose Bennett has resigned from his own group, the Teachers Representative Committee, in what he calls as a move to promote greater unity among teachers in the Public School System.

"For ethical reasons, I must resign

See BENNETT on Page 8



Bennett

Local

PUBLIC NOTICE

December 2003 Violations in Saipan’s Public Water System

Water Samples Tested for Bacteria of “Total Coliforms” Exceeded the Allowable Monthly Standards

(SAIPAN, Monday, January 19th, 2004)— The CNMI Division of Environmental Quality (DEQ) received a January 8th report summarizing drinking water analysis for Saipan, Rota, and Tinian for December 2003. In Saipan, the Public Water System tested positive for both Total and Fecal Coliform bacteria, exceeding the CNMI Drinking Water Regulations and standards for the maximum contaminant levels (MCL) from: December 9-12th and December 15-19th 2003. Public Notice was immediately issued for the Fecal Coliform/E. Coli violations. The Utility collected a total of 79 water samples in Saipan and turned them over to an independent, private company for laboratory analysis. The results also tested positive for “Total Coliform” bacteria. DEQ regulations, based on population, allow no more than five point zero percent (5.0%) of the water samples in any month may contain these bacteria. In Saipan, fourteen percent (14 %) of the water samples tested positive for Total Coliforms.

EPA Says: Total Coliforms Common in Environment

The EPA determines that Total Coliforms **are common in the environment** and **generally not harmful**. When detected in drinking water, however, Total Coliforms indicate that CUC has problems with its Water Maintenance Program, the Water Treatment Program (Chlorine Stations), and older, cracked, & fractured pipes that deliver water. When it rains, underground contamination [pollution—animal wastes, oils, and chemicals seep into the broken pipes or the “runoff” goes to the lagoon and oceans.] This means that the *water treatment* may not work when contaminated by organisms that can cause disease.

Maintenance and operations programs are, therefore, public health concerns, if monthly water standards are not achieved. This also causes consumers to buy additional bottled water. The Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is required to inform DEQ; the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); and, in this Public Notice, **we educate you of problems in the CNMI Water Quality Programs.**

Health Effects

Contaminated water can cause disease. Short-term health effects include: diarrhea, cramps, nausea, headaches, or possibly jaundice, and associated fatigue. These symptoms however, are not only associated with waterborne illness.

Corrective Actions Taken: The Commonwealth Utilities Corporation increased Chlorine Gas Injections and upper management works to ensure that daily maintenance and monitoring of the Chlorine Stations improves to ensure public health & safety. Additional support (money) is requested from US & CNMI programs to finish water projects, **including desalination facilities**, to help people suffering from the lack of water resources and no development underway for the western shoreline from Lower Base to San Jose, Puerto Rico, Navy Hill, and China Town, etc.

Want More Information?

For more information about water operations, customers may contact CUC Water Manager Jess Castro or CUC Special Advisor Pamela A. Mathis at 235-7025. Call the CUC Lab at: 322-4051. Questions that relate to the CNMI Safe Drinking Water Regulations may be addressed to DEQ at the Safe Drinking Water Branch at 664-8509.

LOTTERY

Cleanup volunteers start work on 4 drainages

By **JOHN RAVELO**
REPORTER

Some 73 volunteers tackled four stormwater drainage sites along Saipan’s western shores yesterday, as non-profit group MOVER kicked off its major cleanup project that is funded by a \$5,000-grant from oil giant Exxon/Mobil.

The project gained support from various sectors in the community, including Lt. Gov. Diego T. Benavente, lawmakers and private groups.

Benavente provided the volunteers snacks, while House

Rep. Benjamin Seman gave them lunch. Pacific Islands Club offered the volunteers pastries, while Pacific Trading Co. Ltd. contributed five cases of softdrinks. Some eight volunteers from KAMPIL joined MOVER in the cleanup activity.

Benny Pangelinan, the chairman of the Environmental Interagency Cleanup Operation Team, said other lawmakers have committed to provide logistical support in the coming weeks. EICOT is supporting MOVER, which has slated eight consecutive Sundays to complete the cleanup project

covering more than 20 drainage sites along Beach Road.

He said he would ask House Speaker Benigno R. Fitial to provide lunch on one Sunday. Pangelinan said he requested other lawmakers to sponsor the volunteers’ lunch during the cleanup activities, which gained positive response. Lawmakers who have vowed to provide support include House Vice Speaker Timothy Villagomez, and Reps. Ramon Tebuteb, Joe Guerrero, Oscar Babauta, Jesus Lizama, and Ray Yumul.

“People are out to support the organization’s [MOVER]

objectives,” Pangelinan said.

MOVER president Bonnie Sagana welcomed the participation of KAMPIL volunteers, as he expressed hope that the community project would unite Filipino organizations in the CNMI. He said he would invite another Filipino group associated with EICOT—the Bicol Association—to join the project.

KAMPIL president Honorio Cambronero said he would urge other member to assist in MOVER’s project. He said he would also invite another Filipino group, the Samahang Ilokano-Pangasinense, to pool

volunteers in the coming weeks.

The volunteers removed bottles, broken glasses and trash from the drainage sites at the back of the PIC, the Hopwood Junior High School, and between the backside of the Pacific Gardenia Hotel and Aquarius Resort. MOVER vice president Jun Agda, the project manager, dispatched separate teams to simultaneously clean up four drainage sites.

Sand accretion totally clogged one of the two drainages at the back of Hopwood that volunteers had to shovel them to the sides. When they cleared the

drainage’s mouth, ponded runoff that emitted foul smell began to seep through it.

The volunteers also painted the drainage sites. Joined by volunteers from the Coastal Resources Management Office, they also picked up debris on the beaches and packed them in trash bags.

The “Drainage Cleanup/Restoration Along Saipan Western Shores” project aims to minimize nonpoint source pollution flowing into the lagoon and to eradicate the uncontrolled growth of algae at the drainages’ discharge points to the sea.

CRM agencies to discuss Sugar Dock project tomorrow

Government agencies that compose the Coastal Resources Management Agencies will convene tomorrow at the Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio Multipurpose Center in connection with the proposed Sugar Dock dredging and renovation.

The CRM office scheduled the meeting at the center beginning 9am, expecting it to draw a crowd opposing the Commonwealth Port’s Authority’s choice of Sugar Dock for a new Saipan-Tinian transportation system.

Some Saipan residents who attended the public hearing last Dec. 22 had requested for the venue so that community members could witness the meeting. CRMO permit manager Becky Cruz Lizama also disclosed that there would be another public hearing on Saipan on Jan. 27.

The CRM agencies include the CRMO; the departments of Public Works, Lands and Natural Resources and Commerce; Historic Preservation Office; Commonwealth Utilities Corp.; and the DEQ. They have until Feb. 2 to decide on the CPA’s permit application regarding the Sugar Dock and Tinian Harbor improvements.

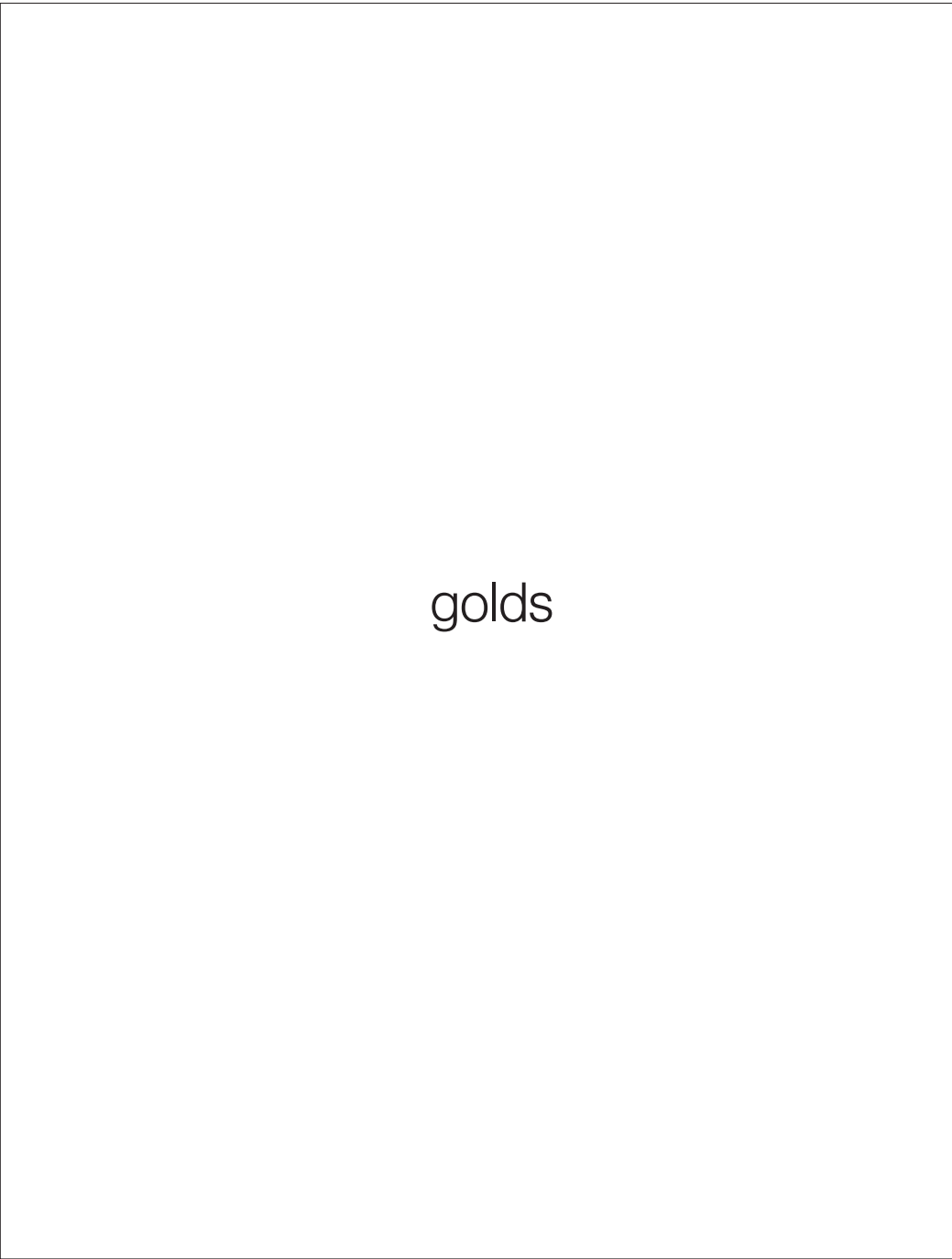
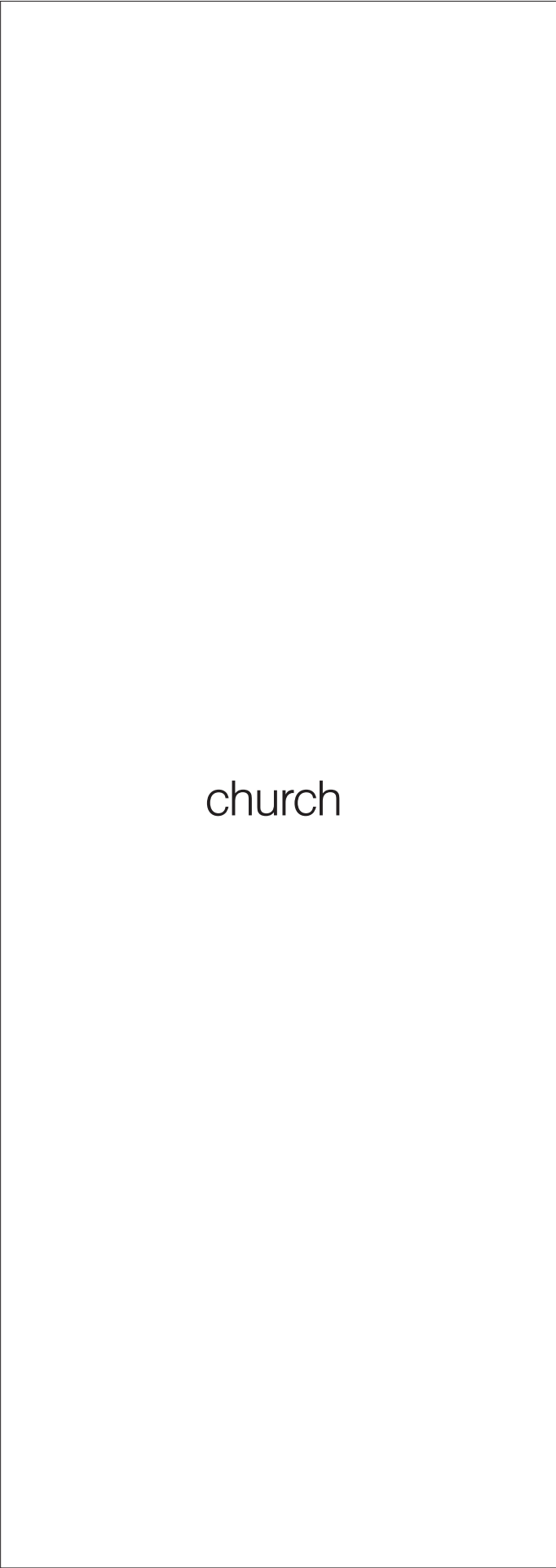
During the first public hearing on Saipan, scores of community members opposed the use of the Sugar Dock for the CPA project, citing their affinity to the place and the potential adverse impacts to the environment—including the possibility of severe erosion at the area and nearby beaches and the alteration of marine habitat.

The CPA and consulting firm Micronesia Environmental Services defended the proposed project, saying the Sugar Dock and nearby beaches even expanded due to sand accretion despite the dredging of some 40,000 cubic yards of material dredged from the dock in 1990. The proposed project entails the dredging of some 20,000 cubic yards of material, according to them.

Tomorrow’s meeting also lists other projects with pending

permit applications on the agencies’ agenda, including the

planned renovation of the World Resort Hotel. *(John Ravelo)*



Cancer Survivor meeting
Date : January 19, 2004
Day : Monday
Time: 6 p.m.
Place: Hyatt – Watabe Room

Salas assumes new post

The Department of Labor has officially announced the appointment of former congressman Andrew S. Salas as the new Deputy Secretary of Labor.

In a statement sent to media offices dated Jan. 22, DOL's acting public information officer Donnalynn Castro said that, as deputy chief of the department, Salas' major focus will be to assist with the streamlining of labor processing to address the backlog issue. He will also be assisting the Secretary of Labor Joaquin A. Tenorio in carrying out his functions, she added.

"Having Mr. Salas as the Deputy Secretary is seen as an asset to the department, since he can provide the management with an additional perspective and can participate with the department's labor reform efforts," Castro said.

Gov. Juan N. Babauta has earlier disclosed plans to appoint the former lawmaker to the

Cabinet post. Salas, who lost in his senatorial bid in the 2003 midterm polls, was earlier rumored to be in the running for the Department of Commerce Secretary portfolio.



Salas

In earlier reports, Salas, a former director of the Commerce department, had denied the Cabinet posting.

Salas, who had chaired the House Committee on Commerce, earlier criticized the lengthy delay in work permit processing at the Labor Department.

This drawn-out bureaucracy, he said, was tantamount to stopping commerce, adding that new businesses that have contemplated setting up shop in the Commonwealth could not move forward with their operations because of the "sluggish" work permit approval process.

Salas will be the first to assume the deputy secretary position at the Labor Department.



NMC Honor Society applications available

Application for membership in the prestigious Phi Theta Kappa international academic honor society at the Northern Marianas College are now being accepted through Feb. 20. If you are a currently enrolled NMC student who has completed at least 15 college credits with a 3.5 average and has no Ds or Fs, you may pick up an application at the NMC Library, or Building K, or from the NMC Counselor's Office and return it by Feb. 20. Benefits are described at www.ptk.org. For more information, call 234-3690 ext. 1205.

Immunization schedule reset

Instead of holding Saturday clinics, the Division of Public Health has rescheduled its immunizations to include evening clinics.

The division will hold extended weekday evening clinics at the Southern Community Wellness Center in San Antonio and Northern Community Wellness Center in San Roque.

The Wellness Centers will be open as follows for the remainder of January:

- Northern Community Wellness Center (San Roque)
- Jan. 26 (Monday) 5pm-7pm
- Jan. 28 (Wednesday) 5pm-7pm

All parents and legal guardians of children 4 months old to 11 years old are asked to call the Immunization Program at 236-8713, 236-8734 or 236-8708 to check on their children's immunization status.

Clinic schedule for February will be announced at a later date.

SWCD meeting on Feb. 3

The Saipan & Northern Islands soil and water conservation district would like to inform the public that the district would meet on Feb. 3, at 1:30pm at the Natural Resources Conservation service office. For more information, contact the SWCD office at 234-6169.

Used oil workshop on Tinian set

The Division of Environmental Quality will hold a used oil regulation workshop on Tinian on Jan. 30, 8am-4pm, at the Tinian Mayor's Office

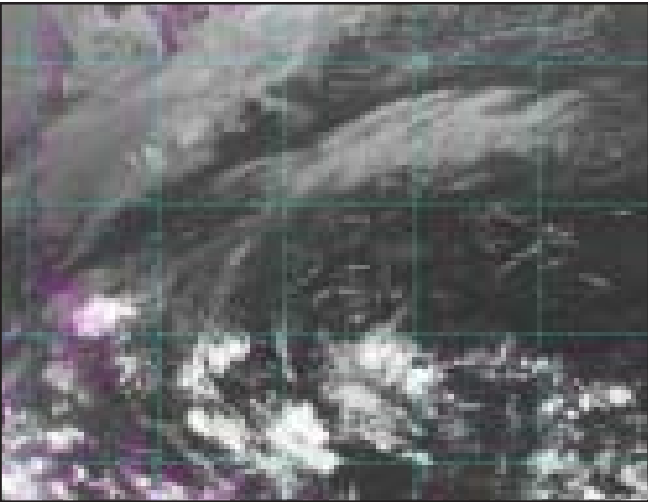
The workshop, sponsored by the DEQ, will focus on the new Used Oil Regulation requirements and the 40 CFR Part 112 and 279. It will also focus on the regulated facilities, compliance deadlines, permitting, and secondary containment berm requirements.

This workshop is open to the general public, but businesses that generate, store, transport and dispose of used oil are encouraged to attend. Registration will be on-site.

Participants who attend and complete the workshop will not only have a better understanding of the new CNMI Used Oil Regulations but they will also learn the importance of why their facility must comply with the new regulations.

For more information, contact Florence S. Calvo (Saipan) at 664-8500/01 or Carmen Quitugua (Tinian) at 433-3169.

WEATHER FORECAST



PICTURE TIME: 1:00 A.M., JANUARY 25, 2004
Western North Pacific between Equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A trough of low pressure is creating scattered showers and a few thunderstorms between 1n and 7n from 132e to 142e. This activity includes southern portions of the republic of Palau and Yap State. Trade-wind convergence is producing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms within 60 miles of a line from 5n155e to 5n161e to 1n164e to 1n172e. This line runs just south of Pohnpei and Kosrae... then south of the Republic of the Marshall Islands. A cold front stretches from 25n145e to 19n138e...then continues southwest as a shear line to 15n130e. Cloudiness and widespread rain are found along and up to 400 miles northwest of this boundary. An old shear line extends from 23n180e to 21n162e. Low cloudiness and scattered light showers are found along and up to 100 miles north of this boundary. The remains of a very old shear line run from 13n180 to 12n152e. Low cloudiness and scattered light showers are found along and up to 90 miles north of this boundary. Extensive upper-level jet stream cloudiness is found north of a line from 23n147e to 23n166e.



SAIPAN AND TINIAN
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: Northeast at 10-15 mph.



GUAM AND ROTA
Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: Northeast at 10-15 mph.



PALAU
Mostly cloudy with scattered showers.
Winds: East at 10-15 kt.



POHNPEI
Mostly cloudy with scattered showers.
Winds: East at 10-15 kt.



YAP AND ULITHI
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: Northeast 10-15 kt.



KOSRAE
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: East at 10-15 kt.



CHUUK
Mostly cloudy with scattered showers.
Winds: East at 10-15 kt.



MAJURO
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
Winds: East at 10-15 kt.

CITY	FORECAST	HIGH	LOW
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	74F (23C)	58F (14C)
Beijing	Partly Cloudy	27F (-3C)	8F (-13C)
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	55F (13C)	51F (11C)
Honolulu	Showers	79F (26C)	64F (18C)
London, England	Partly Cloudy	45F (7C)	33F (1C)
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	63F (17C)	52F (11C)
Manila	Rain	82F (28C)	63F (17C)
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	73F (23C)	50F (10C)
Miami	Partly Cloudy	82F (28C)	67F (19C)
New York City	Icy	26F (-3C)	24F (-4C)
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	28F (-2C)	15F (-9C)
Paris	Cloudy	35F (2C)	25F (-4C)
Pusan	Sunny	31F (-1C)	19F (-7C)
Rome	Cloudy	45F (7C)	27F (-3C)
Salem, Oregon	Rain	45F (7C)	40F (4C)
San Francisco	Cloudy	54F (12C)	48F (9C)
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	20F (-7C)	65F (-14C)
Tokyo, Japan	Partly Cloudy	44F (7C)	27F (-3C)
Washington, DC	Snow	23F (-5C)	19F (-7C)

Four more drainage sites cleaned up

By JOHN RAVELO
REPORTER

Seeing volunteers removing sand and soil from clogging the stormwater drainage in San Jose has prompted Ray Basa to pick up trash himself at a nearby beach.

The 46-year-old Kagman resident, who described the beaches on Saipan’s western shores as nice, usually brings his family there for a Sunday picnic.

“I feel like going out and helping the public. We should support them [volunteers],” Basa said. “Everyone who comes to the beach can see the fruits of their labor.”

An executive of the Northern Marianas College, Basa said the long-term solution to environmental protection is public education, urging beach goers to properly dispose of trash.

Non-profit group MOVER

‘Darkwinged fungus gnats are just harmless pests’

They are slender, mosquito-like insects that commonly plague Saipan’s households. Although irritating and annoying, these pests, known as darkwinged fungus gnats, are nevertheless harmless.

Isidoro T. Cabrera, agricultural consultant to the Northern Marianas College’s Cooperative Research, Extension & Education Service, said the fungus gnats are harmless household pests. Measuring approximately one-eighth of an inch, fungus gnats have long legs and a pair of clear wings.

“A lot of people has been calling me. I always reply to them that it’s a harmless pest. It’s a nuisance pest,” Cabrera said. “It doesn’t sting. It doesn’t bite.”

Besides being nuisance pests, he said the insects pose no known major agricultural harm on Saipan. They can, however, carry species of plant disease-causing agents, he added.

With colder nights expected in February, Cabrera said the population of fungus gnats on the island could increase further.

The flies feed on decaying leaves and grasses, according to the agricultural consultant. He added that the flies reproduce in moist, shaded areas on decaying organic matter, with their larvae living in moist soil.

Although these flies reproduce rapidly, Cabrera said their lifespan is relatively short, with adults living for only seven to 10 days.

Female flies lay up to 300 eggs in batches of two to 30. The eggs hatch in four to six days. The larvae then feed for the next 12 to 14 days before reaching the pupal stage that lasts up to six days.

Cabrera said the flies enter households and even offices through windows and other

yesterday cleaned up four new drainage sites along Beach Road: near the Bicol pavilion, Kilili Beach, San Jose traffic lights and the Marianas Visitors Authority’s offices in San Jose.

MOVER’s vice president Jun Agda said the activity was the second Sunday the group undertook the “Drainage Cleanup/Restoration Along Saipan Western Shores,” which has been funded by a \$5,000-grant from oil giant Exxon/Mobil.

At the drainage site near the San Jose traffic lights, sand and soil that clogged the mouth of the drainage had turned black and filthy. When MOVER volunteers finally managed to remove the material from the drainage’s mouth, stormwater runoff that had accumulated inside the drainage system began gushing out.

The smell was so bad that 50-year-old William Bagano, a volunteer, was prompted to say

openings, especially at night. He said the flies are attracted to light.

Cabrera said using sticky traps would suffice to control these flies. Household pesticide could also be used against the flies. (*John Ravelo*)

that he would have second thoughts about swimming on the beach across the drainage’s mouth. “At least, not at this time.”

Environmental Interagency Cleanup Operation Team chairman Benny Pangelinan explained that the nutrients from the soil could lead to bacterial growth. He said the government should regularly maintain the drainages.

Around 54 volunteers from MOVER joined yesterday’s cleanup activity. With EICOT supervising the project, some volunteers from the Coastal Resources Management Office also joined the effort.

Lt. Gov. Diego T. Benavente and House Rep. Ramon Tebuteb provided snacks and food, while Pacific Trading Corp. donated softdrinks for the volunteers.

Other lawmakers have vowed to provide food to volunteers in the coming Sundays. The cleanup project runs for eight consecutive Sundays and will conclude on the first Sunday of March. Among these lawmakers are House Speaker Benigno R. Fitial, Vice Speaker Timothy Villagomez, and Reps. Joe Guerrero, Oscar Babauta, Jesus Lizama, and Rey Yumul.

When the project kicked off Sunday last week, Rep. Benjamin Seman provided lunch to the



JOHN RAVELO

Accumulated sand and soil clog the mouth of one of the drainages cleaned up yesterday. When MOVER volunteers finally managed to remove the material from the drainage’s mouth, stormwater runoff that had accumulated inside the drainage system began gushing out.

volunteers, Pacific Islands Club offered pastries, while Benavente gave them snacks. Some eight volunteers from KAMPIL, another organization, joined

MOVER in the cleanup activity.

The project aims to minimize nonpoint source pollution flowing into the beach waters and to eradicate the

uncontrolled growth of algae at the drainages’ mouths. Volunteers also picked up debris on the beaches and packed them in trash bags yesterday.

cars

Opinion

Saipan Tribune

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EDITORIAL

The unmentioned AIDS policy

The international fight against AIDS, which was featured prominently in President Bush's State of the Union speech last year, went unmentioned Tuesday night. But the administration is nonetheless ramping up its effort in a serious way: The omnibus spending bill completing its passage through Congress has \$2.4 billion for AIDS in 2004, a fivefold increase since Bush took office. And the administration's budget request for 2005 is expected to be even bigger. Of the four criticisms often directed against the administration's efforts, two are misconceived, one is premature and only one is really telling.

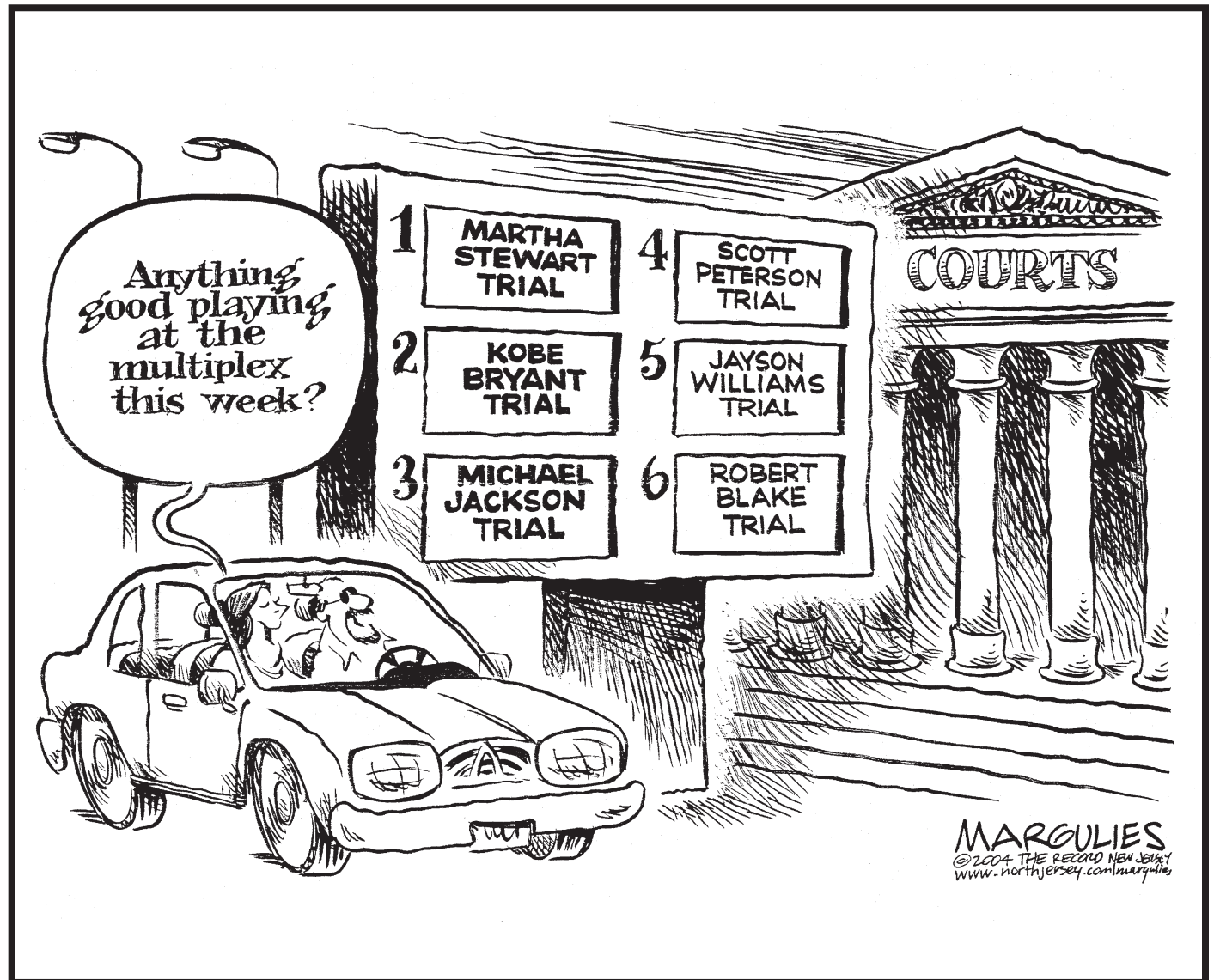
First, the misconceptions. The critics charge that it's bad to fight AIDS through faith-based groups. But a large proportion of medical and social services in poor countries is delivered by mission hospitals and the like; shunning them would be wrong. Likewise, the critics object to the administration's emphasis on programs to encourage sexual abstinence. But these account for a third of the proposed AIDS prevention drive (or 7 percent of the total U.S. effort against international AIDS), making the abstinence focus pronounced but not outrageous. Countries such as Uganda have succeeded in persuading teen-agers to delay their first sexual encounters by a year or more, significantly slowing the spread of the HIV virus.

The premature critique is that the administration is biased against cheap, non-patented "generic" medicines. This would be bad if true: Bush proposes to spend billions in taxpayer money on antiretroviral therapy, and he'd better shop wisely. Moreover, it may be true: Lobbyists for makers of patented drugs spend a lot of cash to influence the president's party, and his trade negotiators often insist that poor countries seeking free-trade deals with the United States accept restrictions on their use of generics. But for the moment officials insist that the push to get antiretroviral drugs to 2 million patients would involve procurement of generics, provided they prove safe. It will be interesting to see whether the safety argument is used as a cover for caving in to lobbyists, but so far that has not happened.

The telling complaint about Bush's AIDS plan is that it is unilateralist. The administration has decided to create its own new initiative, rather than work through the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, which the United States helped to create, and which is chaired by Tommy G. Thompson, Bush's secretary of health and human services. Perhaps this go-it-alone approach will pay off: The United States has a network of embassies and aid officials in poor countries that can oversee projects, something the Global Fund lacks. But as it augments its AIDS budget, the administration is likely to have difficulty increasing disbursements as quickly; in this transition phase, at least, it makes sense to give a large slice of the money to other agencies, including the Global Fund, that have a longer track record.

In the 2004 budget, the president initially requested that only \$200 million go to the Global Fund—less than a tenth of the total. Thankfully Congress, and particularly Rep. Jim Kolbe, R-Ariz., pushed that sum up to \$550 million. The 2005 budget request, which the president will submit soon, should avoid shortchanging the Global Fund again.

The Washington Post



Presidential vision isn't always a good thing

By ARTHUR M. SCHLESINGER JR.
Special to the Los Angeles Times

The president of the United States, wrote Henry Adams, the most brilliant of American historians, "resembles the commander of a ship at sea. He must have a helm to grasp, a course to steer, a port to seek."

The Constitution awards presidents the helm, but creative presidents must possess and communicate the direction in which they propose to take the country. The port they seek is what the first President Bush dismissively called "the vision thing."

Let us interview another president on this point. Franklin D. Roosevelt was by common consent one of the great presidents of the United States. The presidency, FDR said, "is not merely an administrative office. That's the least of it. It is more than an engineering job, efficient or inefficient. It is predominantly a place of moral leadership. All our great presidents were leaders of thought at times when certain historic ideas in the life of the nation had to be clarified." In other words, they were possessed by their visions.

So, FDR continued, Washington personified the idea of federal union. Jefferson typified the theory of democracy, which Jackson reaffirmed. Lincoln, by condemning slavery and secession, put two great principles of government forever beyond question. Cleveland embodied rugged honesty in a corrupt age. Theodore Roosevelt and Wilson were both moral leaders using the presidency as a pulpit. "Without leadership alert and sensitive to change," FDR wrote, "we are bogged up or lose our way."

But a vision per se is not necessarily a good thing. Adolf Hitler had a vision. Josef Stalin had a vision. Especially when visions harden into dogmatic ideologies, they become inhuman, cruel and dangerous. Bush the elder was generally held to have a vision deficit, but that's not the same as having a defective vision. Bush the elder was a moderate as president, and he did not harm the republic.

Bush the younger is another matter. In his State of the Union address, he presented a medley of visions. Is it reasonable to suppose that the son feels that his father committed two fatal errors, which he is determined not to repeat? One might be the folly of alienating the ideological right. The other—the absence of a vision.

Born again, Bush the younger has a messianic tinge about him. He thinks big and wants to make his mark on history. Four hours of interviews left Bob Woodward with the impression, as he wrote in "Bush at War," that "the president was casting his mission and that of the country in the grand vision of God's master plan."

His grand vision told Bush that American troops invading Iraq would be hailed as liberators, not hated as occupiers, and that the

transformation of Iraq under American sponsorship into a Jeffersonian democracy would have a domino effect in democratizing the entire Islamic world.

That dream has waned, and so has the vision that lies behind it. It turns out that the president's vision-free father had a much more accurate forecast of what an American war against Iraq would bring. Bush the elder wrote, defending (with Gen. Brent Scowcroft) his decision not to advance to Baghdad during the 1991 Persian Gulf War, "Trying to eliminate Saddam would have incurred incalculable human and political costs. ... Had we gone the invasion route, the United States could conceivably still be an occupying power in a bitterly hostile land."

The United States is today an occupying power in a bitterly hostile land. In a couple of years, Bush the younger has succeeded in turning the international wave of sympathy that engulfed the United States after 9/11 into worldwide dislike, distrust and even hatred. With his Iraq vision collapsing around him, Bush is trying to dump his self-created mess on the United Nations, heretofore an object of contempt in his administration. And he is trying out a new vision—the moon and Mars.

In this respect he is following the example of President Kennedy, who sought to repair American self-confidence after the Bay of Pigs by proposing to send men to the moon and return them safely to Earth "before this decade is out." A difference is that the preventive war against Iraq was an essential part of the Bush vision, but the Bay of Pigs was not part of the JFK vision. It was a CIA vision inherited from the Eisenhower administration.

I was appalled by Bush's preventive war against Iraq, as I was appalled in the Kennedy White House by the Bay of Pigs. And as I applauded JFK's vision of landing men on the moon, so I applaud Bush's vision of landing men on Mars.

It has been almost a third of a century since human beings took a step on the moon—rather as if no intrepid mariner had bothered after 1492 to follow up on Christopher Columbus. Yet 500 years from now (if humans have not blown up the planet), the 20th century will be remembered, if at all, as the century in which man began the exploration of space.

Some visions are intelligent and benign. Other visions are stupid and malevolent. "Where there is no vision ... the people perish," the Good Book says. Where there is a defective vision, people perish too. In a democracy, it is up to the people themselves to make the fateful choice.

Schlesinger Jr., a special assistant to President Kennedy, has twice won the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award.

Letter to the Editor

Saipan Tribune welcomes contributions. All letters intended for publication must include the writer's name, address and, if possible, fax or telephone number. Letters are edited for space, clarity and fairness.

An alternative to the Teacher Rep election

Congratulations to Mr. Ambrose A. Bennett for winning twice in the recent teacher's rep election. He declared himself a winner before the election for having been influential in getting the election to come about and rightly so. Then he won by sixteen votes from less than one third of all the eligible voters. Let us wish him the best.

However, as Mr. J. Vallejera pointed out in his Tribune column of Jan. 23, the election itself was an embarrassment for our Commonwealth teachers. This low turnout certainly does not give Mr. Bennett any clear mandate to speak for our Commonwealth teachers. He needs none anyway. His letter writing on many topics is regularly printed in both local papers. These letters, though, are often filled with paragraphs loaded with many more I's than collective pronouns such as "we" and "our". Let us hope that as a teacher rep he clearly delineates when he's speaking on behalf of teachers and when he is speaking on his own behalf. This was one of the problems during Franklin Keiper's "lame duck" tenure as BOE rep.

As a fellow teaching colleague who knows Mr. Bennett to be a fair-minded person who truly wants teacher representation, let us consider the following recommendation. Let Mr. Bennett request the governor and the BOE another election at the end of this school year. The election would be held on a Saturday and in at least four different locations in the north, south, east and west quadrants of the island. Tinian and Rota would choose their own similar convenient location, time and date. The Kagman Multipurpose Center, for example, might be a practical polling place for teachers from the three new schools over there. A clear majority of at least 51 percent of all eligible teacher voters would be the necessary quorum for the election to be considered valid.

One has to wonder if the whole process of putting a teacher on the BOE couldn't be solved by the following alternative process. The CNMI teacher of the year (TOY) from one school year becomes the BOE rep the next year by default. This person is then given morning classes to continue their excellent teaching careers and afternoons off or one day off a week to visit other schools and attend BOE luncheons and meetings, which are scheduled to allow the rep to attend. Respective teachers of the year from other schools, including of course Tinian and Rota, would also be given one day or afternoon a month to meet together with the BOE rep. Wouldn't this save time and money for all involved? Wouldn't all schools get equitable representation on the board this way? Guess what? This will never happen—though I'd be glad to be proven wrong. Ego, internal power struggles, nepotism, favoritism, bias, ignorance of unions and collective bargaining and genuine fear of job loss for speaking out will stop these ideas dead in their tracks.

It should also be pointed out that embarrassment about this past election be shared by those in governmental charge and some members of the BOE that let years pass by without seeing to it that at least there was a temporary teacher rep at each and every BOE meeting. There's no easy answer to this teacher rep issue but what seems to be crystal clear is that winning an election participated in by less than 30 percent of those eligible and by less than twenty votes is by no means a clear mandate for leadership. Many teachers, many directions, more elections.

Joe Connolly
Koblerville, Saipan

Facilitating consensus

"I do not agree" are four simple words that usually come in a bellowed cadence of sounds to trip a group discourse into a cycle of endless discussion. Whether it is a committee meeting, a community forum, a formal legislative deliberation, or even just a friendly chat, nothing derails clarity and understanding more than those words.

In classical learning, students are discouraged by practice to ask questions because that would be casting doubt on the veracity of a teacher's pronouncements. In the political arena, to question the voice of authority is to chisel on the foundations of legitimate power. Power seats do not take to questions easily.

In today's democratic space, the right to disagree on a legislative proposal is enshrined in the parliamentary procedure. For every "pro", a "con" is required to ventilate a proposal's merit, presumably, to allow for informed choice. "I may not agree with what you say, but I will defend forever your right to say it," is an oft-quoted statement.

However, "I do not agree," is seldom a statement to designate a different perspective. Often, it is a wrench thrown into the pathway of an oncoming proposal, the throwing of which is full of emotions that clouds rational clarity.

Comes the role of the consensus facilitator. In a group discourse where creating a common mind and a single direction are avowed goals, the art of facilitating consensus is a valued leadership skill.

When presiding over a meeting where the "I do not agree" statement is made, it is helpful to respond by saying: "So-and-so offered us a perspective, and you see it differently. Let's hear how you see it differently." If the speaker persists on addressing him/herself to what another person said, the presider may point out that the rest of the group may have other perspectives as well.

Speakers are encouraged to focus on what they think rather than on their version of what other people have said.

A chalkboard, newsprint (butcher paper) and markers, or any form of writing media always comes handy to capture what is being said. Objectifying the actual words used by speakers makes sense. A chair trying to restate someone's statement by saying something like, "I hear you saying that" does not clarify. It only prolongs unnecessary, if not heated discussion.

Good facilitators never go to a meeting without writing implements. In addition to the chalkboard, or an easel with newsprint, markers, 8x5 cards or plain paper, and masking tape do wonders on a vertical flat surface in objectifying units of data and managing pieces of information.

Now, before one gets the impression that this piece is about discouraging disagreements, it is not. Disagreements abound in real life and it must be recognized as such. This is about arriving at a

By **JAIME R. VERGARA**

Vergara is a Social Studies 6th grade teacher at San Vicente Elementary School and occasionally writes as a guest columnist for the Saipan Tribune.



consensus, and how that might be facilitated.

So, how does one facilitate a consensus? We might revisit the old story of the "truth" likened to an elephant being groped at by blind persons, and each one convinced that their experience constitutes the truth. All we really have are different perspectives. Substitute search for "reality" or "experienced authenticity" for the pursuit of "truth" in arriving at a consensus, and we might have a good grasp of what is required.

Good meetings begin with a clear context. "This meeting is about CATS, not dogs, and we do not have the whole night to discuss it. We have an hour . . ." Parameters are clearly defined.

The value of any group enterprise, be it a corporation, cooperative or ad hoc committee, is in the human resource. Maximizing the potential of the "wily human factor" around a table is the challenge in today's democratized ethos.

Brainstorming has become a handy tool, more so if it addresses a focused question. Either by speaking, or writing, or both, everyone's perspective has to be gleaned. In so doing, we have the prospect of everyone actually learning to listen to one another.

Brainstorming can be short-circuited by those who will demand that concerns or issues be prematurely "prioritized". Arriving at a comprehensive plate of perspectives must be encouraged. Then, ask participants to gestalt (a German term to mean "see the whole/total picture") what they heard. The body might split into smaller groups and write-up or talk-up a group's gestalt, clarify its constituent parts, then report it to the larger body. At this point, proposals would be encouraged, and a possible consensus arrived at. A good consensus never really requires "voting." If a vote needs to be taken, it usually just widens an existing division, and the disagreement continues.

Context. Brainstorm. Gestalt. Proposal. Consensus. A simple five part process that leaders who facilitate consensus have been known to follow.

Of course, there are leaders who are more concerned about their place in the annals of human history than facilitating a consensus. But that's grist for another column.

Why Mars? Because it's there

By **CARL M. CANNON**

Special to the Los Angeles Times

When George W. Bush announced his intention to re-establish a human presence on the moon and send explorers to Mars, the usual criticisms followed like vapors in a jet stream.

The Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank, claimed the mission couldn't succeed unless the National Aeronautics and Space Administration was privatized. Rep. John M. Spratt Jr. of South Carolina, the ranking Democrat on the House Budget Committee, said Bush's vision "has an element of escapism about it." Sen. Joe Lieberman, a Democratic presidential contender, expressed support for future space travel, but not until we've balanced the budget, eliminated our dependence on foreign oil—and conquered disease.

This is not new thinking. Before Thomas Jefferson dispatched Lewis and Clark to explore the vast lands obtained in the Louisiana Purchase, critics protested the rationale of the expedition. "A great waste, a wilderness," complained a Boston newspaper. "We are to give money of which we have too little, for land of which we already have too much." Federalist politician Joshua Green added that the endeavor was "a shameful gross speculation, pretending to bring we knew not what, situated we knew not where, and (with) no more right to it than ... to land in the moon."

Exploration of the moon and Mars will be more expensive than Bush predicts, will probably take longer to accomplish and may provide less in technological gains than he envisions. Likewise, the earthly problems described by critics are real enough. Yet it is Bush and a pantheon of previous presidents—and not the naysayers—who are on solid historical ground.

From the beginning, American presidents and the American people have consistently sought to go beyond the frontiers of nature and knowledge. This impulse is part of America's national makeup, and key to our success as a people.

"I like the dreams of the future better than the history of the

past," said Jefferson, who in writing to John Adams once applied the word "Argonauts"—the great voyagers of Greek mythology—to describe the men of 1776. This is an apt reminder that the Wright brothers' flight and the lunar landing were not historical accidents; they were imperatives of the American mind and the American identity.

"The hallmark of the American adventure has been a willingness—even an eagerness—to reach for the unknown," Gerald Ford observed in a 1976 bicentennial speech. "In the early 17th century, a few fragile vessels—like the Discovery in 1607 and the Mayflower in 1620—sailed across 3,000 miles of unfriendly sea. Their passengers and crew knew far less about their destination than the American astronauts knew at liftoff about the lunar landscape, a quarter-million miles away."

If the resources required of such ventures are great, the courage is greater. Gus Grissom, one of the original seven Mercury astronauts, warned that his profession was dangerous. "If we die, we want people to accept it," he said. "And we hope that if anything happens to us, it will not delay the program. The conquest of space is worth the risk."

Brave words did not cushion the impact on Lyndon Johnson when Grissom and two other Apollo astronauts were killed in a launch-pad fire. "The shock," LBJ said later, "hit me like a physical blow." American space travel continued, however, pushed by Johnson and future presidents despite the losses of the space shuttle crews.

John Kennedy had invoked a challenge to the Soviet Union in 1961 when announcing his goal of putting a man on the moon within a decade. But by the next year, he was appealing to loftier national instincts. Kennedy invoked the words of British explorer George Mallory, who, when asked why he wanted to climb Mount Everest, replied, "because it is there." "Well, space is there, and we're going to climb it," Kennedy said. "And the moon and the planets are there, and new hopes for knowledge and peace are there."

Cannon covers the White House for National Journal.

Saipan Tribune

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PNG villagers shut oil project, demand roadwork

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea (The National/PIR)—Villagers in the Gobe area of Papua New Guinea's Southern Highlands province have forced the closure of an Oil Search oil and gas project.

The villagers entered the project site yesterday, but it could not be confirmed if they have shut down the valve to prevent the flow of oil to the terminal in the Gulf of Papua.

The villagers, who are landowners of the project site, were protesting the failure of the National Government to complete the construction of a road that will link their area to Kikori in the Gulf province.

A Port Moresby spokesman, Edward Kae, who is the chairman of the Imawe Bogasi ILG, said the villagers made their demand known to company officials at the project site.

"They have told company officials that they will not leave until they get a positive answer from the government," Kae said.

Kae said the road was promised in 1998 in a "no road, no oil" agreement signed between the government, landowners and Chevron Niugini.

Since then a company, CIVPAC has been engaged to do some work, but lack of funds from the government

has prevented the company from completing the road.

Kae said they need at last K10 million to complete the road, and the villagers want an assurance from the National Government that the money would be made available for the Semberigi to Kikori road.

Among the demands presented to Oil Search representatives at Gobe are:

Meanwhile, Kae also admitted taking K6.12 million (US\$1.9 million) belonging to landowners out of the bank. This is money meant for landowners in his area.

But he said he used the money to pay creditors, whom landowners and their leaders in Port Moresby have borrowed money from to spend while waiting for their royalties.

LITERACY CONFAB

CNMI teachers and community leaders including former Rep. Malua Peter and Board of Education member Marja Lee Taitano attend the third annual Reading and Family Literacy Conference Saturday at Garapan Elementary School. The Public School System said that some 100 participants showed up for the event.



LIBERTY DONES

PSS

From Page 1

Georgia, Rhode Island, Alabama, Maryland, Massachusetts, Tennessee, Florida, and others.

The CNMI's starting pay ranks 10th, after Alaska (\$33,146), New Jersey (\$32,057), District of Columbia (\$31,050), New York (\$31,016), Connecticut (\$30,092), Pennsylvania (\$30,007), California (\$29,601), Hawaii (\$29,204), and Michigan (\$28,999).

Waldo noted that CNMI teachers are better off—after tax—compared with their counterparts in California and New York, who lose some 27 percent of their pay to federal and state taxes.

Although CNMI teachers pay similar taxes, they end up getting back their local taxes through rebates.

This, even if PSS' has had no salary

increases for about 13 years now, except in 1998, 2000, and 2002.

Last year, PSS said it had no plans to raise the salary of teachers amid the existing suspension of within-grade increases across the board due to current economic condition. The Board of Education has not lifted the WGI suspension except at the end of FY 2002.

Right now, there are some 160 PSS staff whose salaries have remained frozen on step 12.

Under the rules on frozen salaries, an employee pay hike must be frozen for at least two years with no break in service in order to be eligible to receive a salary differential of 5 percent.

This salary differential is a one-time payment that is given to any employee for the past two years and is given at the end of the fiscal year.

Officials said the PSS-proposed FY2004

budget did provide for a salary hike schedule but since it did not pass the Legislature, no WGI would take place this year.

"This is the worst year I've seen," said Waldo during Friday's board meeting.

Education commissioner Rita H. Inos said the PSS has the ability to raise funds "federally but not locally." She said, though, that PSS would only implement an increase if it is uniform or across the board.

She said that PSS would need some \$750,000 to \$1 million to raise personnel salary.

The PSS is operating on a continuing budget of \$37.2 million. Based on PSS budget estimates, it would spend \$34.3 million for personnel, nearly \$2 million for operations, and some \$84,000 for housing allowance in FY 2004.

PSS has 1,111 authorized positions, but it has 907 funded FTEs.

AG

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Right now, Shell Marianas Inc. owns all equipment on all eight Shell gas stations on Saipan, according to company executive Jeff Boyer. The ownership covers building structures, tanks, and pumps. The retail stations, though, have independent operators for Shell, Boyer said.

He refused to comment when asked about the issue on divorce,ment,

referring the inquiry to Shell Marianas president Phil Stalker, who was unavailable for comment as of press time. Mobil Oil Mariana Islands has yet to comment on the issue.

Yvonne Babauta, board chairwoman of the Tres Amigas car club, finds the issue's economics complicated. On one hand, she said ownership of retail stations by the oil giants could lead to lower fuel prices. "If [gas stations are] owned by them, it [their ownership] will benefit us because

[fuel prices are] going to be cheaper."

On the other hand, she said that Shell's recent 7-cent increase in the prices of petroleum products meant additional costs for motorists. "I guess I'm just used to it [price adjustment]. It's on and off." She couldn't say if the recent price adjustment—the first on Saipan this year—was justified or not.

Earlier, Shell Marianas said market forces in Singapore triggered the increase in pump prices on Guam and Saipan, citing a combination of "extremely

strong demand" from Japan and China and "tight supply" as factors pushing prices of refined gasoline products. But Stalker assured that Shell would roll back fuel prices when market conditions improve and ex-refinery prices ease.

On Guam, Stalker said Shell's competitors have also raised fuel prices recently. There was no reported increase yet on Mobil's gas prices on Saipan.

The AGO had earlier announced that it is monitoring the prices of petroleum products, as it vowed to

HAWAII

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to take a leadership role alongside our Pacific neighbors to determine the future of the region," Lingle said.

Babauta said that, with Hawaii rejoining the council, Lingle would be able to attend the next PBDC meeting in Washington D.C. in Feb. 2004.

The PBDC was established by the governors of American Samoa, Guam, Hawaii and CNMI in 1980 to address regional economic and social concerns. It has been based in Honolulu even during the years when Hawaii dropped out of it.

Babauta had earlier announced Hawaii's intention to rejoin the council, saying he had met with Lingle's representative Bob Awana, who called on him at his office on Capitol Hill last December.

Babauta, who assumed the PBDC presidency in 2002, said that Lingle's presence "will add tremendous credibility to the organization."

Babauta had recently said that PBDC will reorganize and implement needed reforms to ensure its viability and regional responsiveness. This included inviting back Hawaii into the regional organization.

This was agreed on when Babauta convened a semi-annual PBDC conference on Saipan a few months ago.

Hawaii was actually a PBDC charter member but it withdrew its membership during the time of Hawaii Gov. Benjamin Cayetano (1995) due to funding concerns. Cayetano's administration had reportedly concluded that other priorities merited the annual dues previously expended by the state on PBDC activities.

Babauta said Hawaii's membership will definitely boost PBDC's standing, especially in tapping financial assistance from the U.S. Congress.

On organizational changes, he said PBDC leaders aim to hire staff who would work on obtaining funds for the organization. "We want to obtain funding for our activities so that we don't just rely on the fees from members," said the governor.

He said that PBDC would focus on health, education programs, and on getting federal grants. PBDC would also tap the expertise of nongovernment organizations and work with foreign governments.

PBDC was founded in 1978 to ensure that the American Pacific Islands could get better access to federal grants, with the goal of supporting cooperation and development projects. The charter members included American Samoa, Guam, Hawaii, and the CNMI.

In recent years, PBDC had suffered from serious funding woes due to non-collection of fees from members as well as the lack of federal support.

The CNMI, which had pulled out from the group during the time of Gov. Froilan Tenorio, had planned to withdraw from the organization in 2000, citing lack of federal support for the group.

The CNMI alone reportedly failed to pay its membership fee when it reentered the Council following Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio's assumption to office in January 1998. It was reported that the CNMI had not allocated funds for PBDC in the proposed FY 2000 budget.

In Fiscal Year 1999, the CNMI reportedly appropriated some \$35,000 in total funds for the regional organization. (*With AP*)

BENNETT

From Page 1

from TRC effective today. As an elected teacher representative, I owe it to the PSS teachers to really represent them on the Board of Education. I cannot effectively do it if I'm affiliated with a particular group like TRC; so to avoid the teachers from being polarized further, I'm taking this initiative to resign [from TRC]," said Bennett in an interview yesterday.

He said that, among others, he would reach out to the other teachers' group, the Association of Commonwealth Teachers.

ACT earlier refused to join TRC after losing in the recent teacher representative election. Candidates from both groups had agreed to join the wining party once the election was over.

"I will talk with everybody. If we have to move forward as a group, we have to unite and set aside personal differences," Bennett said.

Bennett hastened to add, though, that TRC will remain a viable teachers' organization. "My resignation does not dissolve TRC as a working mechanism for teachers to express their concerns... TRC will remain viable...because another teacher representative to BOE will have to be elected again in four years," he said.

Bennett said that as a "neutral" or "independent" person now, he intends to create a panel consisting of teacher representatives from all schools,

including four schools that are associated with AOT such as Marianas High School, Koblerville Elementary School, and Garapan Elementary School.

He said that ACT members would be fairly treated in the panel. "They will be treated fairly and given an opportunity to participate equally with other teachers and schools."

The creation of an independent panel, he said, aims to eliminate the problem of representation on BOE. "It forces all teachers to be part of the solu-

tion or to butt out if they freely give up their right to representation."

"I want to thank the TRC and I will look forward to working with all the teacher representatives on the panel," said Bennett.

TRC, which was instrumental in the election of Bennett to the BOE, was formed in fall 2003. It is now headed by Aaron Lewis. Other officers are Mary Binauea, Sharleen Crisostimo, and Nora Hayter.

NMI students attend TRIO leadership confab

AGANA, Guam—Many of the students attending a leadership conference workshop laughed at a presentation the other day that dissected the tensions that can arise from cultural differences.

But as they acknowledged in their laughter that cultures can clash, they also agreed that characteristics of the different cultures found in the Pacific region should be celebrated, not scoffed at.

More than 100 students who are participating in the Student Leadership Conference are from Guam, Hawaii, the CNMI and the Federated States of Micronesia.

Joanne Ige and Yoichi K. Rengiil, directors of the TRIO programs at the Guam Community College and University of Guam, respectively, organized the three-day conference.

Ige said the three-day conference, which wraps up today, is an important part of the overall aim of the TRIO programs.

“The goal of the TRIO program is to help students who are at a disadvantage—meaning they mostly come from low-income families, they are first-generation college students, or they have disabilities. We try to help these students complete high school and college so they can become leaders in their community and maybe help other students who are in a similar situation,” Ige said.

Rengiil said the leadership conference is meant to help students become good leaders through a variety of workshops that, among other things, foster team-building and communication skills.

The leadership conference was the first attended by Raymond Adams, 16, from Waialua High School in Oahu, Hawaii.

Adams said the workshop on teamwork was one of his favorites.

“I learned a lot about needing a team and listening and using the different ideas they have if I want to be a good leader,” Adams said. “It’s totally corny, but I walked away realizing there really is no ‘I’ in ‘team.’ It’s a cliché, I know, ... but there’s a truth to it.”

Southern High School senior Rachel Hecita said she liked how the teamwork presentations pointed out leadership skills that sometimes seem obvious but are often neglected.

“Communication is something that is so important, like sitting still and listening, really listening to what someone is saying. And then knowing how to say what you really mean and want out of a situation,” Hecita said.

Rosa Nakasone, 19, a sophomore at the College of Micronesia in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia, said teamwork and leadership require understanding that people have different ideas that stem from their cultures.

“I think people, especially leaders, need to remember to listen to their team members and realize that their ideas might be

what’s needed to make a difference in whatever situation they’re in,” said Nakasone, a health-care major.

The three students said they will use the skills they learned toward reaching their goals.

“I’m going to the University

of Nevada ... as a nursing major,” Hecita said. “Then I want to go into pre-med and study to be a pediatrician. So, yeah, I would

say I need communication skills for my studies, but I need it especially when I become a pediatrician.” *(PDN)*

microl
oh yeah
+red

Expert to students: Read every night, limit TV

By **LIBERTY DONES**
REPORTER

Reading and watching TV do not go together. If students really want to learn and succeed in school, they need to develop a daily reading habit and limit their TV time, according to visiting reading specialist Nancy Updegraff, Ph.D.

Speaking during the 3rd annual Reading and Family Literacy Conference Saturday at Garapan Elementary School, Updegraff highlighted the parents’ important role in ensuring that their children devote time for reading and other schoolwork.

“Parents need to make sure that their children read every night, and to limit the amount of their TV time,” she said, citing findings that, if children read at least 10 minutes a night, “they will increase their reading grade level by one year.”

She noted that parents have all the authority to regulate the TV viewing time—or similar activities such as computer games—of their children and instill in them the value of doing their homework.

The written word, she said, needs to be introduced to children as early as possible.

At age two, she said, children should have been introduced to

short book stories and children songs. At the end of age six, children should already be reading by themselves.

But she acknowledged that for many children, including some of those in the upper grade, reading remains a struggle. It indicates that these children are not trained to read at home, she said.

“You can’t do it all in school. Those having difficulty in the upper grades are most likely those who don’t read at home for fun. The only way to read is to practice,” she said.

She noted, though, that starting to read is never too late for anybody. She advised struggling readers or their parents or guardians to borrow tapes and resource materials from the library and let them “listen and read” at home.

Students can also be recorded while reading and make them listen to themselves.

For those who tend to read long text without comprehension can be asked to read and stop every five minutes to write down what he or she remembers from the text. This way, they will learn to read and comprehend at the same time. With the proper technique and right motivation, she said all students can be taught to be a good reader.

If children are unable to read,



LIBERTY DONES
Visiting reading specialist Nancy Updegraff, third left, is flanked by, from left, Board of Education member Marja Lee Taitano, vice chair Dino Jones, education commissioner Rita H. Inos, BOE chairman Roman Benavente, and teacher representative to the BOE Ambrose Bennett during the 3rd Annual Reading and Family Literacy Conference at Garapan Elementary School Saturday.

she said, it means that “we have not found a way to teach them.” She noted that students are individuals who have different ways of responding to learning. The best approach for teachers and parents, she said, is to be

prepared to meet each child’s learning needs.

For 30 years, Updegraff has worked as a teacher, reading specialist, reading recovery teacher leader, reading consultant, and curriculum coordinator. She is author of 12 published articles and recipient of 40 research grants. She earned a bachelor and master of arts degrees in English, elementary education, and secondary education from Wayne State University, MA from Northwestern University, University of Illinois, Governor’s State University, University of Michigan, and University of

Chicago. She received her Ph.D. in Psychology from the University of Chicago.

“I don’t get tired of learning. We can never outgrow learning,” she said.

When asked, Updegraff said that despite her busy schedule, she still manages to read four to five books a week. She said she reads 1,300 words a minute. Normally, a person reads an average of 600 words a minute. Updegraff makes use of speed reading techniques.

She is currently affiliated with the Governor’s State University. She is also an

education publishing consultant of Harcourt.

Over 100 participants, mostly teachers from both public and private schools attended last Saturday’s conference.

The annual event is designed primarily for parents and teachers of students from kinder to 12th grade in efforts to boost the literacy level of CNMI students.

Earlier survey results showed that majority of PSS 1st grade students had “below and far” below reading abilities, with more than half of them not recognizing the sound and letters of the alphabet.

Pay hike recommended for Fiji parliament

SUVA, Fiji (The FijiSUN)—Members of Parliament could award themselves a massive pay increase during the next sitting of the Lower House in February.

The increase is proposed by the Independent Parliamentarian Emoluments and Benefits Commission chaired by former Minister for Education, Taufa Vakatale.

The commission has recommended that all members of the House of Representatives be paid an annual parliamentary salary of F\$30,000 (US\$17,700) - up from the present basic of F\$22,000 (US\$13,000).

This, says the commission, must be revised regularly with either the cost of living adjustments (COLA) applicable to the civil service or in accordance with the practice adopted to replace COLA.

It has also recommended a constituency allowance (non taxable) of \$8,000, expenses of \$1,200 and a telephone allowance of \$1,500 per annum.

For meetings of the House or committees in Suva or other

centres where the member maintains a home 30 kilometers away, he or she should receive an allowance of \$150 per day plus cost of travel by the most direct route.

MPs in select committees are to receive a sitting allowance of \$80 per day while the chairmen receive \$120.

However, members of select committees will be paid \$12,000 per annum and \$18,000 per annum for chairmen.

With the recommendation, a Member of the House of Representative receives about F\$51,700 per annum (US\$30,600).

All parliamentarians contacted yesterday said they preferred to air their views during the debate.

The matter is likely to be debated in the first Parliament sitting of this year, which begins on February 2.

The commission recommended that office salaries be paid as follows:

- Prime Minister, in 2003, received \$72,050. Recommended – \$72,851.

- Speaker – \$71,160 to \$72,945.
- Deputy Prime Minister – \$54,540 to \$55,904;
- Attorney-General – \$50,900 to \$52,173;
- Cabinet ministers – \$47,924 to \$49,122;
- Leader of the Opposition (full-time) – \$48,500 to \$49,713;
- Part-time – \$29,831 to \$30,576;
- Assistant ministers – \$24,600 to \$25,215;
- Deputy Leader of the Opposition (full-time) – \$4800 to \$4920;
- Deputy Speaker \$4633 to \$4749;
- Leader of the House – \$6754 to \$6923;
- Whips (Government and Opposition) - \$3420 to \$3506; and
- Whips of Third Party (four members and over) – \$1831.

The commission had also recommended for the post assistant minister to be equated to Minister of State, where this term appears for the purpose of entitlements.

OCONNOR

Business

SEC eyes civil charges against NYSE firms

By MICHAEL J. MARTINEZ
AP BUSINESS WRITER

NEW YORK (AP)—The Securities and Exchange Commission is contemplating civil charges against at least five New York Stock Exchange specialist firms for violating securities laws and exchange rules against improper trading activities.

LaBranche & Co. Inc., Van Der Moolen Holdings NV and Fleet Specialist, a subsidiary of FleetBoston Financial Corp., each confirmed they received a "Wells notice" from the SEC,

a formal notice in which the commission warns a company that civil enforcement charges may be recommended against it.

Sources close to the investigation told The Associated Press, on condition of anonymity, that two other firms also received notice, though the sources declined to name the firms.

All five firms have also received a similar notice from the NYSE, which intends to bring a formal disciplinary proceeding against the firms for violating exchange rules.

An SEC spokesman said the

commission does not comment on ongoing investigations. Separate statements from LaBranche, Van Der Moolen and Fleet Specialist firms they would cooperate with both SEC and NYSE investigations. Spokesmen for each company would not provide additional comment.

Specialist firms have been under fire recently for allegedly slanting customer trades to benefit their firms instead of customers. The NYSE and SEC have been investigating these practices for months.

In October, the NYSE said it would

seek tens of millions of dollars in fines against five specialist firms—Bear Wagner Specialists, Spear, Leeds & Kellogg Specialists, Fleet Specialist, LaBranche and Van Der Moolen—for improper trading.

An NYSE spokesman had no comment on the notices issued Friday, nor on the status of its own investigation.

Last month, the California Public Employees Retirement System announced a class action lawsuit against the NYSE and seven specialist firms for bilking investors out of millions of

dollars through fraudulent trading practices. Besides the aforementioned firms, the CalPERS suit also named Performance Specialist Group and Susquehanna Specialists Inc.

Spokesmen for Goldman Sachs, parent company of Spear, Leeds & Kellogg, and Performance Specialist Group would not comment on whether their firms also received Wells notices. A spokesman for Susquehanna said his company did not receive an SEC notice. Bear Wagner did not return repeated calls seeking comment.

Techs could see a boost from IT spending

NEW YORK (AP)—After a year of strong gains in technology—and especially in the semiconductors that power personal computers and a variety of other electronic gadgets—investors feel stocks like Advanced Micro Devices and rival Intel Corp. are overvalued. They're also facing corporate outlooks that appear bland for at least the first quarter of the year.

Yet there's still hope. As the rest of the economy recovers, many businesses will begin upgrading their older technologies, some of which are left over from the Y2K scare and are overdue for replacement. That means more workstations, more laptops, more phones—and more semiconductors.

When AMD announced its fourth-

quarter earnings earlier this week, the semiconductor company posted its first profit in two years, reported near-record sales and topped Wall Street expectations by an impressive 8 cents per share.

The stock went from \$17.38 on Tuesday, right before the company released the good news, down to \$15.32 at the close of business Friday. The cause: a tepid outlook for the first-quarter, a seasonally low quarter for chip makers.

According to Barbara Gomolski, an analyst with the technology think tank Gartner, spending on information technology could rise about 5 percent in the coming year. While not a huge jump, it represents the first overall increase in IT spending in two years.

"The trend line is moving up, and

that's good news," Gomolski said. "You're starting to see some replacement spending that had been postponed for a few years."

Spending on the so-called "big iron" of IT—large servers that manage networks and Web sites—is still likely to be flat, but smaller items such as handheld computers and laptops are high up on the shopping list for many companies.

"Once there's greater confidence that this recovery is sustainable, you can expect corporate America to spend more significantly on IT, and in greater amounts," said Eric Gomberg, senior semiconductor analyst at Thomas Weisel Partners. "That will eventually impact semiconductor companies."

Northwest Airlines swings to profit

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—Because of asset sales and other one-time gains totaling \$492 million, Northwest Airlines turned in a profitable fourth quarter.

For the quarter ended Dec. 31, Northwest reported net income of \$370 million, or \$4.18 per share, in contrast with a loss of \$488 million, or \$5.68 per share, a year earlier.

Operating revenue increased nearly 3 percent to \$2.41 billion, from \$2.34 billion.

One-time gains included \$299 million from the sale of Pinnacle Airlines Corp.; \$45 million in gains from the sale of some of Northwest's holdings in discount travel Web sites Hotwire and Orbitz and a debt exchange; and a non-cash gain of \$148 million from a transaction involving

debt secured by foreign real estate.

Without the unusual gains, the nation's fourth largest carrier lost \$129 million, or \$1.49 a share for the quarter, an improvement from the loss of \$178 million, or \$2.08 per share, reported a year earlier, excluding unusual items.

The results were 10 cents a share better than the consensus \$1.59 a share loss estimate of analysts surveyed by Thomson Financial.

Still, Northwest shares were down 63 cents to \$13.36 on the Nasdaq Stock Market.

For the full year, Eagan-based Northwest earned \$248 million, or \$2.74 a share, including unusual gains of \$801 million, in contrast to a 2002 loss of \$798 million, or \$9.32 a share. Revenue rose slightly to \$9.51 billion, from \$9.49 billion.

Marcos juror among Stewart jury finalists

NEW YORK (AP)—A woman who acquitted former Philippines first lady Imelda Marcos of racketeering and fraud is among the four dozen people entering the final round of jury selection for the Martha Stewart trial.

The prospective jurors return to court Monday for the final elimination round, when lawyers on both sides exercise challenges to whittle down the pool to 12 jurors and six alternates. Testimony is scheduled to begin Tuesday.

Marcos was defended by one of Stewart's lawyers, John J. Tighe Jr., and that prompted prosecutors to raise an initial objection to the potential juror.

U.S. District Judge Miriam Goldman Cedarbaum allowed the woman to remain in the pool after she said she did not recognize Tighe, according to a transcript of Friday's jury selection that was released Saturday.

Stewart, 62, is accused of conspiracy, securities fraud, obstruction of justice and two counts of lying to investigators in connection with her Dec. 27, 2001, sale of about 4,000 shares of ImClone stock just before the value of the company's shares plunged.

Prosecutors say she was warned to sell the shares because a negative government report about an ImClone cancer drug was about to be announced. She has pleaded innocent, maintaining she had a standing order to sell the shares if they fell much in value.

The identities of all the potential jurors have been kept secret.

In 1990, a federal jury in Manha-



Martha Stewart smiles as she arrives with her attorney Robert Morvillo at the Manhattan federal court for the fourth day of jury selection, Friday, Jan. 23, 2004, in New York. Stewart faces charges including conspiracy, obstruction of justice and securities fraud.

ttan acquitted Marcos and Saudi financier Adnan Khashoggi of racketeering and fraud. Marcos was

accused of helping loot her homeland of \$222 million and sinking the money into art and real estate.

CORPORATE Roundup

Wal-Mart suit denied class-action status

PANAMA CITY, Fla. (AP)—A judge has denied class-action status for a lawsuit that accuses Wal-Mart of failing to pay low-level employees for extra work.

Circuit Judge Glenn Hess wrote in his ruling that if the plaintiffs were able to prove Wal-Mart shortchanged the employees, determining the amount owed to each worker would overwhelm the court system.

Hess wrote that the court would face between 900 and 2,300 trials to determine damages if even 1 percent of the 90,000 to 230,000 Wal-Mart employees in Florida since 1997 joined the lawsuit.

A former night shift manager in the Panama City Beach Wal-Mart Supercenter and several former employees of Chipley Wal-Mart sued the nation's largest retailer in 2001. They said they were forced to work through breaks, skip meals and return to unfinished tasks after they had clocked out.

They wanted to include all the hourly workers Wal-Mart stores have employed in Florida since 1997 in a class-action, a number Wal-Mart said would include 232,358 people.

Causey may be key in Enron prosecutions

HOUSTON (AP)—Richard Causey, the newest defendant in the sprawling investigation of Enron Corp.'s implosion, could be a crucial link to the company's former titans if he ends up cooperating with prosecutors, experts said.

"In any type of financial fraud, once you nail the numbers guys, the house comes crashing down," Robert Mintz, a former federal prosecutor and an expert in white-collar crime, said Friday. "That's what the government is trying to do now by indicting Causey and trying to put pressure on him."

Causey pleaded innocent to conspiracy and fraud charges Thursday. His lawyers declared he has done nothing wrong, and will fight accusations that he was the principal architect of schemes that fooled investors and Wall Street into believing Enron was a powerhouse.

The Justice Department cracked the 50th floor that once housed Enron's executive suite last week by securing cooperation from former finance chief Andrew Fastow, who pleaded guilty to two counts of conspiracy.

Nation

NASA rover Opportunity zeroes in on Mars

By **ANDREW BRIDGES**
AP SCIENCE WRITER

PASADENA, Calif. (AP)—The rover Opportunity zeroed in on Mars late Saturday night, making its final turn and positioning a heat shield designed to protect it from burning up during a fiery plunge through the planet's atmosphere.

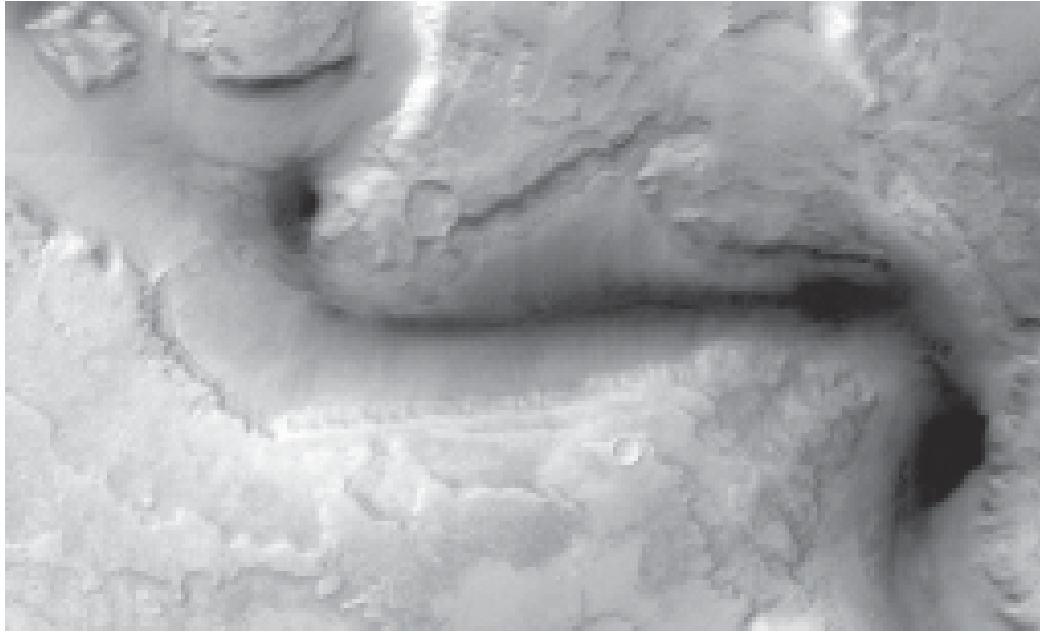
The turn began about 90 minutes before Opportunity was to land on Mars.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration warned that communications with the six-wheeled robot would be spotty as it entered and descended through the martian atmosphere. Word of a safe landing could take as long as 22 hours, NASA said.

Opportunity's twin, Spirit, landed Jan. 3. Spirit began malfunctioning Wednesday, after days of sending pictures and other scientific data, but engineers said they were closing in on the problem that had reduced the rover to spewing gibberish and beeps.

Opportunity was targeted to land 6,600 miles—or halfway around Mars—from Spirit. Together, the twin rovers make up a \$820 million mission to determine if Mars ever was a wetter world capable of sustaining life.

Opportunity, like Spirit, must execute a choreographed



This image released Friday Jan. 23, 2004, by the European Space Agency (ESA) of Mars was taken by the High Resolution Stereo Camera (HRSC) on board Mars Express according to scientists. The image in color and 3D was taken on orbit 18 on Jan. 15, 2004 from a height of 273 km and is located on Mars east of the Hellas basin at 41 South and 101 East. The area is 100 km across, and shows a channel (Reull Vallis) once formed by flowing water scientist say. The landscape is seen in vertical view, North is at top

sequence of events to ensure its safe arrival on Mars. The only difference: Opportunity was to open its parachute 4,500 feet higher than Spirit did to compensate for the higher elevation of its landing site.

Spirit developed problems after working nearly flawlessly for days.

Engineers brought stability to the rover by disabling its flash memory, which is similar to the memory digital cameras use to store pictures, said Orlando

Figuerola, director of NASA's Mars exploration program.

"We made good progress overnight," project manager Pete Theisinger said during a news conference at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory. "The rover has been upgraded from critical to serious."

Spirit resumed transmitting data Friday, but only in limited batches. The malfunction may prevent the rover from taking another drive on Mars for as long as three weeks, Theisinger said.

Despite its woes, scientists said there is still a chance the rover can fully recover.

JPL Director Charles Elachi said other NASA spacecraft, including Voyager, Magellan and Galileo, have recovered from even graver problems.

"I am completely confident, without any hesitation, that I think we will get that rover back to full operation," Elachi said.

Mission members were able to stop the rover from rebooting its computer—which it had done

roughly 130 times—and place it in so-called "cripple" mode to bypass the computer chips that make up its flash memory.

They also succeeded in commanding the robot to sleep after it stayed up two nights in a row when it should have been turned off to conserve power.

The root cause of Spirit's problems remained elusive. NASA's inability to reproduce the problem in laboratory software tests suggests that something is awry with the rover's hardware, Theisinger said.

During its first weeks on Mars,

Spirit took thousands of pictures and began its work prospecting the soil and rocks around its landing site. The science work stopped Wednesday.

NASA sent Spirit to Gusev Crater, a broad depression believed to once have contained a lake. It launched Opportunity toward Meridiani Planum, a flat, smooth region relatively free of the reddish dust that cloaks Gusev. Scientists believe Meridiani abounds in a mineral called gray hematite, which typically forms in marine or volcanic environments rich in water.

NY officer kills man in housing project

NEW YORK (AP)—A police officer on routine patrol killed a man at a public housing project early Saturday, and the police commissioner said later that the shooting was not justified.

The 35-year-old Housing Authority officer, who was not identified, had never before fired a shot on duty in his 11 1/2-year career, Commissioner Raymond Kelly said.

The officer and his partner were patrolling the housing

project when they encountered Timothy Stansbury Jr., 19, who was going up a stairway to the roof to cross to another building shortly before 1 a.m., Kelly said.

The officer was standing 3 feet to 4 feet from Stansbury when he fired one round into the man's chest, the commissioner said.

"At this point, based on the facts that we have gathered, there appears to be no justification for this shooting," Kelly said. "This is a tragic incident that compels

us to take an in-depth look at our tactics and training, both for new and veteran officers."

The officer was placed on restricted duty and his gun and badge were taken away, authorities said. The second officer was placed on administrative desk duty.

Stansbury's family members said the young man had no criminal record and was well liked.

"They're killing us like dogs out here, pure dogs!" said Stansbury's mother, Phyllis

Clayburne, a police department crossing guard. "It's not right and it needs to stop!"

Police said the teenager had been at a party and crossed to another building to visit someone else. He was coming through a doorway when the officer looked in and shot him, police said.

Stansbury ran down five flights of stairs and collapsed in the lobby, Kelly said. Stansbury was taken to Woodhull Hospital, where he died.

virtue
+red

Candidates spar over Iraq issues in NH

CONCORD, N.H. (AP)—Howard Dean sharply questioned John Kerry's judgment on Iraq on Saturday as Democratic presidential rivals raced through a final, frozen weekend of campaigning before New Hampshire's first-in-the-nation primary.

"I would be deeply concerned about that kind of judgment in the White House," said Dean, the one-time front-runner struggling to overcome a reversal that has vaulted Kerry into first place in the New Hampshire polls.

Dean said Kerry opposed the first Persian Gulf War in Iraq in 1991, and supported the 2003 invasion, views contrary to his own. "I think my position has proven to be right twice," Dean added.

In rebuttal, a spokeswoman for Kerry predicted the remarks would backfire. "When is Howard Dean going to realize that voters are tired of these same old angry attacks," said Stephanie Cutter. "Voters are looking for a steady hand, not a clenched fist."

In public, the seven men seeking the nomination against President Bush engaged in the

rituals of New Hampshire politics during the day. Retired Gen. Wesley Clark attended a pancake breakfast in the company of actor Ted Danson and actress Mary Steenburgen of "Friends" fame.

Kerry laced up his skates for a hockey game that drew Ray Bourque and other retired Boston Bruins stars back to the ice.

At the same time, though, the campaigns were maneuvering for advantage in the states that vote after New Hampshire, beginning with seven contests in all regions of the country on Feb. 3.

Thus, North Carolina Sen. John Edwards, who hopes for a breakthrough victory in South Carolina on that day, announced he would compete in Missouri. His campaign has hired two former aides to Missouri Rep. Dick Gephardt, who dropped out of the race on Tuesday.

"It's late, but it's late for everybody and this gives us a strong team to start with," said a spokeswoman, Jen Palmieri.

The state became competitive when Gephardt quit the race, and its 74 delegates make it the biggest prize of the night.

School honor rolls under privacy scrutiny

By MATT GOURAS
AP WRITER

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—The school honor roll, a time-honored system for rewarding A-students, has become an apparent source of embarrassment for some underachievers.

As a result, all Nashville schools have stopped posting honor rolls, and some are also considering a ban on hanging good work in the hallways—all at the advice of school lawyers.

After a few parents complained their children might be ridiculed for not making the list, Nashville school system lawyers warned that state privacy laws forbid releasing any academic information, good or bad, without permission.

Some schools have since put a stop to academic pep rallies. Others think they may have to cancel spelling bees. And now schools across the state may follow Nashville's lead.

The change has upset many parents who want their children recognized for hard work.

"This is as backward as it gets," said Miriam Mimms, who has a son at Meigs Magnet School and helps run the Parent Teacher Association. "There has to be a way to come back from the rigidity."

The problem appears unique to Tennessee, since most states follow federal student privacy guidelines, which allow the release of such things as honor

rolls, U.S. Department of Education officials said.

"It's the first time I've heard of schools doing that," said department spokesman Jim Bradshaw.

But Nashville school lawyers based their decision last month on a state privacy law dating back to the 1970s—a law that's not always followed because no one challenged the honor roll status quo.

School officials are developing permission slips to give parents of the Nashville district's 69,000 students the option of having their children's work recognized. They hope to get clearance before the next grading cycle—in about six weeks at some schools.

Until then, school principals are left trying to figure out what they can and can't do.

Sandy Johnson, chief instructional officer for the Nashville schools, says the restrictions go "far beyond the honor role."

"It's for anything having to do with grades and attendance or anything normally reserved just for the student or parent," she said.

Getting parents to sign permission slips won't help protect students from being left out, but at least it will comply with the law, school officials said.

Christy Ballard, general counsel for the state Education Department, said she's "getting a lot of calls" since the Nashville decision, and will recommend that all Tennessee public schools



Walker Mimms, 12, a 6th grader at Meigs Magnet School in Nashville, Tenn., is shown with his mother, Miriam Mimms, and dog, Strider, as he shows some of the academic awards he has won over the years on Saturday, Jan. 24, 2004.

get honor roll permission slips from parents.

In Knoxville, school district spokesman Russ Oaks said they do not think posting good information about a student violates state law. He said they put such information in the same category as sports statistics.

But some school systems already get parents to sign a release before student information is made public. Others think it might be a good idea to get rid of the honor roll altogether, as Principal Steven Baum did at Julia Green Elementary in Nashville.

"The rationale was, if there are some children that always make it and others that always don't make it, there is a very subtle message that was sent," he said. "I also understand right to privacy is the legal issue for the new century."

Baum thinks spelling bees and other publicly graded events are leftovers from the days of ranking and sorting students.

"I discourage competitive games at school," he said. "They just don't fit my world view of what a school should be."

Parents at most schools, though, have been close to outrage over the new rule.

"So far, what we've heard parents say is 'This is crazy; spend your time doing other things,'" said Teresa Dennis, principal at Percy Priest Elementary School. "It does seem really silly."



Bush radio speech touts health care plan

President Bush, who has made health care a top item in his election-year agenda, used his weekly radio address Saturday to promote his plan to address rising medical costs and the growing ranks of the uninsured.

The cost of health care is becoming a bigger concern for Americans, according to an Associated Press poll. And several surveys suggest the public is evenly divided on Bush's handling of domestic issues such as education and health care.

As a result, Democrats have pledged to stress the increase in the number of people without health insurance during his three years in office.

In his State of the Union address Tuesday, Bush touted his ideas for attacking the problem. He repeated that remedy, for what he termed "a great priority for our nation," in Saturday's speech.

The topic also is the focus of a trip Bush is making Monday to Little Rock, Ark.

The president is reviving old proposals for a cap on medical malpractice lawsuit awards, which he says are driving up doctors' insurance premiums and thus the cost of care, and for tax credits of up to \$1,000 for individuals and \$3,000 for families to help low-income workers buy health insurance.

He also is proposing that people who buy catastrophic health care coverage as part of newly created health savings accounts be allowed to deduct 100 percent of the premiums from their taxes.

He urged the Senate to act on a House-passed bill that would allow small businesses to band together and negotiate lower insurance rates so they can cover workers.

And he said his 2005 budget, to be delivered to Congress next month, would request double the funding—to \$100 million—for projects that use promising health information technology, with the goal of a unified system of computerized medical records that Bush said would reduce errors and save money.

The president asked Congress to act this year on all his proposals. (AP)

Chimney fire kills 3 Michigan children

RILEY TOWNSHIP, Mich. (AP)—Three children died early Saturday in a rural house fire that began in the chimney for a wood-burning stove.

The stepfather of two of the children suffered burns to the face and body trying to save them, said Sgt. Jerry Bassett of the St. Clair County Sheriff's Department.

"What can you say at a time like this?" said David Masar, who lost two grandchildren and one great-grandchild in the blaze.

Masar said his daughter, Krystal Canup, 39, and her husband, Randall, 46, were asleep downstairs when the fire erupted at 3 a.m. He said his daughter called and said "they couldn't get the kids out of the house."

"Randy ran upstairs. He brought with him a bathrobe that he used as a shield, but it didn't work and he called down for a wet towel," Masar said. "He still couldn't get through and while he was running, he tripped on some rubble and fell down and rolled down the stairs."

Autopsies showed Kristen Marie Keller, 13, Tyler James Masar, 6, and Nathaniel Lee Gould, 3, died of smoke inhalation.

Krystal Canup, who Masar said was the mother of Kristen and Tyler and the grandmother of Nathaniel, was treated at the scene for smoke inhalation.



Indiana man dies after winning game show

ELWOOD, Ind. (AP)—A man who won \$57,000 in an Indiana lottery game taped for television died hours later when he was hit by a pickup truck.

The "Hoosier Millionaire" featuring Carl D. Atwood, 73, was broadcast Saturday night after his family said they wanted the show to go on, Hoosier Lottery director Jack Ross said.

The broadcast concluded with a photo of Atwood accompanied by text reading: "In memory of Carl Atwood."

Atwood won the money Thursday during a two-hour taping in Indianapolis.

"I am very thankful," he proclaimed. "I must admit that I never expected to be leaving the show with this amount of money. Now I can purchase a very nice car."

Hours later, Atwood was hit by a truck as he walked to the grocery store where he bought the winning ticket near his home in Elwood, about 40 miles northeast of Indianapolis. He died at a hospital.

The driver has not been charged.

Atwood would have been among those invited back to compete for a \$1 million grand prize in three weeks.

"We will work with the family to make arrangements on how to handle the championship show," Ross said. "We will certainly have a place on that show for someone who the family chooses to take his place."

Weapons, WTC photos found when home probed

NEW YORK (AP)—Police sent to investigate a backyard explosion that injured an artist Saturday discovered weapons and ammunition along with material related to the World Trade Center and other sensitive locations, authorities said.

The discovery brought members of the Joint Terrorism Task Force to the Brooklyn home of Christopher Hackett to investigate, FBI spokesman Joe Valiquette said.

Police said they weren't sure of the significance of the material, which included photos of the World Trade Center and information on the Brooklyn Bridge and a city reservoir.

Hackett, 31, dialed 911 just before noon after suffering burns and head injuries while working on an art project, authorities said. He was in stable condition at Lutheran Hospital.

Authorities found eight pounds of black powder, two high-powered rifles, a 9 mm handgun, a shotgun, a machine gun, a case of shotgun shells and 400 rounds of other ammunition, Johnson said.

One hostage released from Arizona prison

BUCKEYE, Ariz. (AP)—One of two correctional officers held hostage in a prison guard tower by two inmates for nearly a week was released Saturday.

The guard, who was not immediately identified, was being taken to a hospital, said Department of Corrections spokeswoman Cam Hunter.

The release occurred after negotiators delivered an item demanded by the inmates, Hunter said. She did not reveal what the inmates were given.

Another hostage and the two inmates remained in the tower, Hunter said.

Foster dad sentenced for binding children

DOYLESTOWN, Pa. (AP)—A man who took photos of two foster children wrapped in duct tape in their cribs was sentenced to 12 to 30 months in prison.

In imposing the sentence on Neil Broe, Judge Alan Rubenstein said the 30 pictures depicted "a horrifying image ... one that will stay with me for a long time."

Some of the photos showed the 2-year-old boy and 1-year-old girl wrapped at least six times with duct tape around the chest and legs. One picture showed a child's bare legs dangling through crib rails, the ankles bound with packing tape and the diaper wrapped with duct tape.

Authorities alleged Broe, 42, and Colleen Broe, 34, bound the children to keep them under control. Colleen Broe was acquitted of child abuse charges in November and accused her estranged husband of staging the photos because the couple was in the midst of a divorce.

Neil Broe pleaded guilty to child endangerment, but denied using duct tape.

"I'm guilty of holding on to these photos too long and not getting involved," he said Friday. "I should have thought about the children."

Asia

EU may lift ban on arms sales to China

By ROBERT WIELAARD
AP WRITER

BRUSSELS, Belgium (AP)—The European Union may end its ban on arms sales to China this spring, diplomatic sources said Friday, a move that could allow China's big-spending military to buy cutting-edge weapons ranging from French Mirage jets to stealthy German submarines. At a meeting Monday, the EU foreign ministers will debate the issue but not make a formal announcement, said the officials.

"It will take a few months," said one EU diplomat close to the negotiations. "But we are not talking about something way off in the future. In the spring, perhaps," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity. China's military has been moving quickly to modernize, fueled by the country's booming economy. A Pentagon report in 2002 warned China was intent on developing a vastly more potent military, with its training focusing more on America as an enemy.

For 13 consecutive years, China has made double-digit increases in the public budget for the 2.5-million strong People's Liberation Army. Reported defense spending grew 17.6 percent to \$20 billion in 2002—but foreign analysts say the true spending is likely four times the official figures. Europe imposed the ban on weapons sales after Beijing's bloody crackdown on pro-democracy protesters in Tiananmen Square in 1989. But EU spokeswoman

Emma Udwin said there had been a "shift of mood" in European capitals, although some opposition remained. "There is clear pressure from China to get the arms embargo lifted," Udwin said. The foreign ministers of the 15 EU nations—and the 10 countries joining the bloc in May—have agreed to re-examine the embargo, said French foreign ministry spokesman Herve Ladsous in Paris. "No one is really opposed to this objective," he added. Proponents of ending the ban

say there will still be the EU's Code of Conduct for arms sales to act as a safety net. The code forces EU nations to ensure the arms they sell are not used for internal repression, external aggression or where serious violations of human rights have occurred. The EU view has long been that China must significantly improve its human rights record before the arms embargo can be lifted. However, last fall, German

Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, on a visit to China, said France and Germany wanted the embargo gone. There still is opposition to that in Europe. "We are willing to debate an end to the arms embargo, but for us this is not the right moment to lift it," said a Dutch diplomat. The Netherlands and Scandinavian nations lead opposition to ending the arms ban, along with the European Parliament.

Vietnam confirms new bird flu death

BANGKOK, Thailand (AP)—Thailand's prime minister said Saturday the bird flu epidemic could hurt the country's giant chicken export sector, as Vietnam confirmed that a sixth person had died from the disease. Thai officials, following weeks of denial, acknowledged the virus' presence after poultry farmers claimed not enough was being done to stop the disease from spreading from nearby countries. Vietnam and Thailand are the only countries this year where avian flu has been passed onto humans. But the virus has hit millions of chickens, raising fears it might mutate, link with regular influenza and foster the next human flu pandemic. Asia is on a region-wide health alert, with governments slaughtering millions of chickens to contain outbreaks in six countries: Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, South Korea, Japan and Taiwan.



A Cambodian woman buys chicken in a market in Phnom Penh, Cambodia Saturday, Jan. 24, 2004.

WHO: Bird flu vaccine to take longer than six months

BANGKOK, Thailand (AP)—A vaccine for the bird flu that's rampaging through Asia is more than six months away, a spokesman for the World Health Organization predicted Sunday, as hard-hit Thailand enlisted hundreds of its soldiers to help in the mass slaughter of chickens to prevent the disease from spreading further. Vietnam and Thailand are the only countries this year

where humans have caught the avian flu, with six confirmed deaths in Vietnam and a suspected fatality in Thailand. The virus has felled millions of chickens in six Asian nations and has put the entire region on a health alert. The WHO had said earlier it hoped a vaccine for the disease would be ready in four weeks' time. But the U.N. health agency has said on its Web site that it fears that its forecast that the virus

would mutate had come true. "I don't think we're looking at a workable vaccine within six months. That's too late for the influenza season in Asia but it would be available," Peter Cordingley, the WHO spokesman for the region, told an Associated Press reporter in Manila, Philippines. "It could be available for next winter's flu season ... It's not promising this year," he added.

Hundreds of Thai soldiers enlisted for operation bird flu

SOONG PEENONG, Thailand (AP)—Hundreds of Thai soldiers lined up Sunday morning to receive gear for a battle none thought they would ever fight. Donning rubber gloves and boots, pink, blue and purple shower caps, along with safety masks, the troops were enlisted

to help clear farms of chickens in Thailand's Suphanburi province—the area hardest hit by an outbreak of bird flu. "It's not dangerous, but don't be neglectful," Deputy Agriculture Minister Newin Chidchob said as he briefed soldiers lined up at the village hall. "The safety masks may be

uncomfortable because you're not used to them, but don't even think of taking them off." Some 450 troops were joined in the operation by 60 prisoners from the provincial jail. In Thailand, prisoners are sometimes called out to dig ditches, repair sewage works and perform other manual public service labor.

Cambodia, Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, Vietnam and Thailand where two boys, aged six and seven, are seriously sick and two

others were thought to have been exposed. A massive slaughter of chickens is underway to stop the

spread of the virus. But the operation has its own risks. The WHO has warned that workers involved in culling can be exposed.

mplt

nmhc

Pakistan nuke expert confined to capital

By MATTHEW PENNINGTON
AP WRITER

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP)—The father of Pakistan's nuclear program, considered a national hero for giving the Islamic world its first atomic bomb, has been confined to the capital as investigators probe whether scientists leaked weapons technology, an acquaintance said Saturday.

Abdul Qadeer Khan has been questioned "many times" in recent weeks, said Zahid Malik, author of the book "Islamic Bomb" on Pakistan's nuclear program.

"He's cooperating (with the investigation) but he's satisfied that he's done nothing wrong," Malik, who met with Khan on Thursday, told The Associated Press.

After denying for years that its scientists might have been involved

in proliferation and provided technology to North Korea, Iran, Libya and Iraq, Pakistan recently acknowledged that some individuals might have leaked information for personal profit.

On Saturday, President Pervez Musharraf told reporters that the extreme secrecy surrounding the development of Pakistan's nuclear program 30 years ago gave wide latitude to scientists—and possibly allowed them to sell information.



Khan

"Covert meant scientists moved around with full autonomy in a secretive manner," he said, adding that the program "could succeed only if there was total autonomy and nobody knew. That is how it continued."

"Now, if there was some individual or individuals, unscrupulous, if they were for personal gain selling national assets ... it was possible

Musharraf says nukes will be safe

DAVOS, Switzerland (AP)—Pakistan's president said Saturday that airtight military control over his country's nuclear weapons will keep them safe from terrorists—even if something happens to him.

Pervez Musharraf, who endured two assassination attempts in the past month, told The Associated Press that "as long as the military of Pakistan remains, nothing can go wrong."

Speaking on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum, Musharraf also revealed details of how the development of Pakistan's secret nuclear program gave wide latitude to scientists, possibly allowing

because it was not open, it was not under strategic check and controls. That is why it was possible," he added.

Speaking at the World

them to sell nuclear secrets "for personal gain."

The president told reporters that Pakistan is investigating the possibility that government officials knew about leaks of technology abroad. Agents also are checking bank accounts of nine scientists and administrators detained on suspicion of selling information to Iran and elsewhere, an Interior Minister in Pakistan said Saturday.

"We will sort out everyone who is involved," Musharraf said.

He said Pakistan's covert program to obtain nuclear weaponry started about 30 years ago, after neighboring India conducted nuclear tests, and that

Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, Musharraf said his country's investigation started after Iran disclosed to the U.N. inspection agency the names of

scientists were given "freedom of action" to develop the technology.

"Covert meant scientists moved around with full autonomy in a secretive manner," he said, adding that the program "could succeed only if there was total autonomy and nobody knew. That is how it continued."

"Now, if there was some individual or individuals, unscrupulous, if they were for personal gain selling national assets ... it was possible because it was not open, it was not under strategic check and controls. That is why it was possible," he added.

people who provided them with nuclear technology—including Pakistani scientists.

Musharraf said agents were investigating whether Pakistani

government officials knew of technology being leaked overseas.

The probe also includes checks into the bank accounts of scientists and authorities who have been detained in connection with the suspected information leaks, an Interior Ministry official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The official said investigators suspect one scientist and one other person did something for personal gain. He would give no names or further details.

"Pakistan's investigations are vigorous. And they are looking into all dimensions, including financial aspects," Foreign Ministry spokesman Masood Khan told AP.

Eight scientists and administrators from the Khan Research Laboratories—Pakistan's leading nuclear weapons facility that is named after Khan—are currently being held for what the government has labeled "debriefings."

18 prisoners freed in Kashmir

SRINAGAR, India (AP)—The government in Indian-controlled Kashmir on Saturday released 18 political prisoners from jails in the strife-torn Himalayan region and promised to free another group soon as a peace overture, a news report said.

Saturday's prisoner release comes two days after historic talks between moderate

Kashmiri separatist leaders and Deputy Prime Minister Lal Krishna Advani aimed at ending the bloody insurgency in the Himalayan region.

The release of Kashmiri detainees was one of the key demands of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, Kashmir's most prominent separatist organization. The talks were the first-ever

between the separatist leaders and India's political leadership.

Mufti Mohammed Sayeed, the top elected official of India's Jammu-Kashmir state, told the Press Trust of India news agency the detainees were released after the charges against them were dropped.

He said more would be freed next month during the Eid al-Adha,

the Muslim feast of sacrifice.

Since taking power nearly two years ago, Sayeed's government has been reviewing the charges against many of the detainees and releasing those held for minor offenses.

Over the years, hundreds of people have been held in detention in Kashmir without trial, a sore point for most Kashmiris.

672 skydivers set mass free-fall record

BANGKOK, Thailand (AP)—In a world record for a mass jump, 672 skydivers from 42 countries leaped from six aircraft over the Thai capital on Saturday, organizers said. At least three jumpers were injured upon landing.

The previous mark of 588 skydivers was set in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2000,

according an organizer of the event, Herman Landsman, and the Guinness World Records Web site.

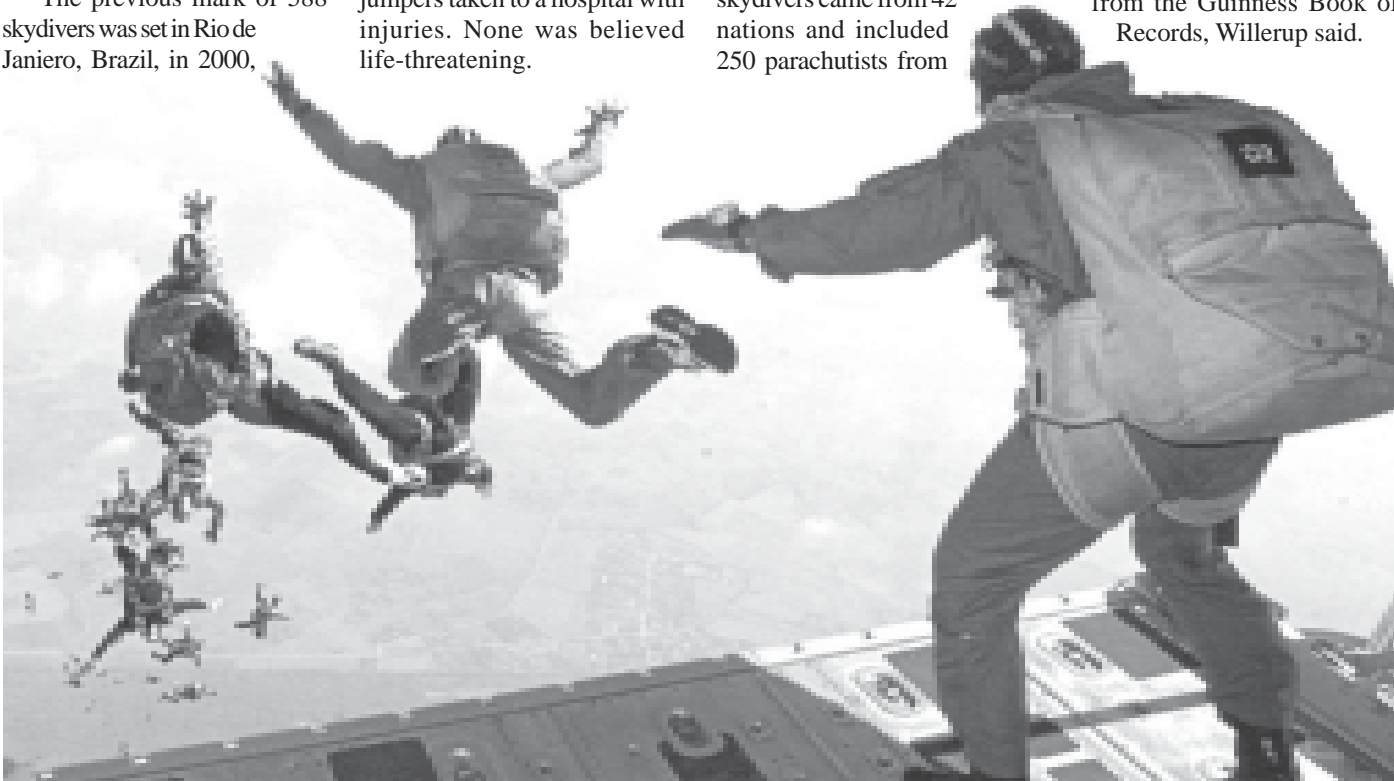
Wind blew several skydivers off the landing zone near Bangkok's Grand Palace, and reporters saw at least three jumpers taken to a hospital with injuries. None was believed life-threatening.

The divers leapt out of six C-130 military transport planes at 7,000 feet. Several landed in trees and one hit the roof of a university building.

A spokeswoman for the group, Karina Willerup, said the skydivers came from 42 nations and included 250 parachutists from

the Thai armed forces.

The jump has been recognized as a world record by the Paris-based World Air Sports Federation, which tracks skydiving feats, and organizers are planning to seek approval from the Guinness Book of Records, Willerup said.



372 skydivers of "the World Team '04" jump from the C-130 cargo plane during the rehearsal jumps for the Royal Sky Celebration 2004, over Kam Pang San airport in Nakhon Pathom province 56 Km south of Bangkok on Wednesday, Jan 21, 2004. Royal Sky Celebration 2004 is part of celebration to honor Her Majesty Queen Sirikit on the completion of her 6th astrological life cycle.



Chinese train station blast kills two

BEIJING (AP)—A possible suicide bombing at a train station in central China killed two people Friday and injured three others, the government said.

The blast occurred at 6:01 a.m. in the ticket sales hall of the railway station in the city of Zhengzhou, an industrial center, the Xinhua News Agency said. One person was killed instantly and another died later in a hospital, the agency reported.

"The explosion is possibly a suicide bombing," Xinhua said, citing police.

Seven people were detained and the blast was under investigation, the report said. It didn't identify the person killed or give any other details.

Explosives often are used in attacks in China stemming from grudges or business disputes. Most gun ownership is illegal, but explosives are readily available for construction and mining.

Associate of Taliban leader arrested

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan (AP)—Pakistani authorities arrested a former Afghan provincial governor and close associate of ousted Taliban leader Mullah Omar in a border town Saturday, a Pakistani official said.

Mullah Abdul Manan Khawajazai was picked up by Pakistani police and intelligence officers in the southwestern border town of Chaman around noon, said Col. Basit, head of Pakistani border security in the area, who uses only one name.

He was being held in custody in an unspecified location for security reasons, Basit said.

Afghan authorities praised the arrest, and Afghan Deputy Interior Minister Hilalludin Hillal said they would seek his extradition.

Landslide cuts off Nepalese capital from rest of country

KATMANDU, Nepal (AP)—A landslide triggered by rains blocked a major highway, severing the Nepalese capital from the rest of the country, officials said Sunday.

Hundreds of people in vehicles were stranded on both sides of the landslide at Krishnabhri on the Prithvi highway, about 80 kilometers (50 miles) west of Katmandu.

Katmandu is not connected by rail, and depends on the highway for food and fuel supplies. It is the major route that links the capital with the rest of the Himalayan nation.

Police stationed near the area said bulldozers were being used to clear the debris on Sunday.

The landslide struck on Saturday morning following rains since Friday.

World

US death toll in Iraq reaches 500



AP
U.S. soldiers from the 1st Armored Division take cover after descending from a Bradley fighting vehicle before a raid in a Baghdad neighborhood, in this June 28, 2003 file photo.

By PAUL GARWOOD
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

TIKRIT, Iraq (AP)—A powerful bomb exploded under a U.S. armored vehicle in the cane fields north of Baghdad on Saturday, killing three American soldiers and pushing the U.S. death toll in the Iraq conflict to 500.

Reaching that threshold underscores the dangers still facing U.S. forces in Iraq as President Bush’s administration prepares to seek help from the United Nations in building a new Iraq, after shunning the world organization for months.

Two Iraqi civil defense fighters were also killed and two American soldiers wounded when the bomb exploded under their Bradley fighting vehicle. The group was searching for land mines and roadside bombs near Taji, about 20 miles north of the Iraq capital, 4th Infantry Division spokesman Lt. Col. Bill MacDonald said.

The blast flipped the 30-ton vehicle and set it afire, witnesses said. Three men fleeing in a white truck were detained, and soldiers found bomb-making material in the vehicle, MacDonald said. Residents

reported that American soldiers rounded up an undetermined number of young men as well.

MacDonald said the remote-controlled bomb was made up of two 155mm artillery rounds and other explosives. Hours afterward, young Iraqis pilfered bits of charred metal in a large crater left by the blast.

The military also said a U.S. soldier died from a non-hostile gunshot wound south of Baghdad. The incident occurred Friday evening near Diwaniyah, the command said in a statement. No further details were released.

The deaths raised to 500 the number of American service members who have died since the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq started March 20. Of those, 346 died as a result of hostile action and 154 of non-hostile causes, according to Defense Department figures.

Most of the deaths have occurred since President Bush declared an end to major fighting on May 1. The death toll from the Gulf War, when an American-led coalition drove Saddam Hussein’s invaders from Kuwait in 1991, was 315.

In Afghanistan, 100 Americans have been killed, less than a third of them from hostile fire.

The deaths come as insurgents have shifted to using roadside bombs and hit-and-run tactics like the attack Saturday. A new troop rotation over the next four to six months will address that change, replacing heavy weaponry with high-tech, mobile fighting gear, a senior Army official said Saturday on condition of anonymity.

The change will also reduce troop numbers from 130,000 to 105,000 in the largest troops rotation since the World War II, the official said.

A military spokesman in Baghdad, Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt, said troop morale remained high despite the rising death toll. U.S. officials say the number of attacks against coalition forces has declined sharply since November, in part because soldiers are using more aggressive tactics.

“I don’t think the troops have any doubt what their mission is,” Kimmitt said. “They know they have a nation that stands behind them. They know they have a

military that stands behind them ... I don’t believe that any arbitrary ... casualty figure is going to cause any soldiers to lose their will or lose their focus.”

But officials believe insurgents may be showing increasing sophistication. They have downed several American helicopters in recent months in some of their deadliest attacks, possibly even using shoulder-fired Soviet-made missiles like SA-7s.

Reaching the 500 threshold could again raise questions

among the American public about Bush’s Iraq policy as the U.S. presidential campaign picks up, analysts said.

“I think it’s symbolic in the sense that maybe a lot of people who have not paid attention in recent weeks ... will say ‘I thought that we were in much better shape than this,’ and ‘What’s going on?’” said Lawrence J. Korb, vice president of the Council on Foreign Relations and assistant secretary of defense under former President Ronald Reagan.

mayon cervical
cancer
(pls. reduce to fit)

Health & Fitness

Keeping germs off your travel itinerary

By **SUSAN SPANO**
LOS ANGELES TIMES

You're taking a seat on a plane headed for Martinique, Maui, Bora-Bora. You fasten your seat belt and turn to the woman next to you. She sneezes, then dabs her red nose with a tattered tissue.

You know instantly that you may as well forget the beach, get off the plane and go home. Nursing the cold you're bound to catch from her will be easier in your own bed and old jammies.

Joe Graedon, co-author of "The People's Pharmacy," has several other ideas on avoiding a cold when you travel:

- Take your leave calmly, making sure you get ample rest. "We know that traveling is stressful and that stress makes you vulnerable, whether you're going to Grandma's house or New Zealand," Graedon says.

- Pack a surgical facemask and wear it if you end up next to someone with a runny nose. Though cold viruses are tiny enough to breach most masks, we tend to get infected by touching our faces with hands that have contacted things cold sufferers have touched, such as airplane armrests. Wearing a mask makes it harder to touch your face, diminishing the chances of introducing your neighbors' pathogens into your system.

- Wash your hands often, using the hospital protocol: 30 seconds of soap and water, which is about the amount of time it takes to sing the "ABC" song very slowly. Put a paper towel between your hand and the doorknob as you leave the lavatory so you don't pick up germs and undo all the good you just did.

- Drink plenty of non-caffeinated, nonalcoholic beverages to stay hydrated.

- Conquer jet lag as soon as possible, using exercise, exposure to sunshine, melatonin, short-acting sleeping pills or whatever works for you. "If you can't get a decent night's sleep," Graedon says, "your immune system caves in."

A tactic that was originally developed for people who suffer from sinusitis is SaltAire, a nasal wash made of a gentle, drug-free salt solution with an easy-to-manage applicator, available in larger drugstores. Using it in the privacy of the lavatory before, during and after a flight helps rinse away germs and seems to decongest people who already have colds, they say.

Of course, travelers are exposed to many other illnesses worse than colds, not the least of which is the flu, particularly widespread this year. "Influenza is an absolutely distinctive illness with an acute onset of high fever, chills and body ache," says Dr. Claire Panosian, director of travel and tropical medicine at University of California, Los Angeles, Medical Center. "Once you have had it, you will never confuse it with the common cold." Panosian strongly believes in getting a flu shot.



LOS ANGELES TIMES

Darryl Gaines, foreground, leads a spinning class with a twist • he does astrological readings during the workout.

Astrology buff puts a new spin on cycling class

By **JEANNINE STEIN**
LOS ANGELES TIMES

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif.—As the group cycling class settles into a warm-up, the instructor delivers his motivational spiel. But this one's a little different from the usual let's-have-fun-with-fitness speech.

"This weekend," says class leader Darryl Gaines, legs pumping at a speedy clip, "Mars and Pluto are going to move in the sky, which means that we have a lot of power available right in front of us, so let's use it. We're going to ride with that tonight."

It has to be the quintessential Los Angeles experience—astrology mixed with exercise in something called Astro Rev. The physical realm meets the astral plane; the human body joins with the heavenly bodies. It seems painfully gimmicky, a surefire way to get the trend-conscious to sweat. But for 42-year-old Gaines, the combination is just a new way to approach fitness.

"The idea really is," he says, "that it's a newscast. We talk about what's going on for all of us. We look at specific aspects in the sky for the week, and not only do we talk about how it affects us physically, but also spiritually. We stick with planets that rule energy, and we capture the theme of the class based on that energy."

Exercise-wise, this isn't that different from other indoor cycling classes, which use specially designed stationary bicycles to simulate road races. As popular as group cycling has remained since its debut 17 years ago (most large gyms offer classes), participation has decreased 10 percent in the last four years, according to the International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association. It's not a huge decline, but it's enough to make clubs

Ideas for making exercise fit

By **JOHN BRILEY**
SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON POST

When's the best time of day to exercise? People burn 10 percent more fat calories with early-morning workouts, one study shows. But endurance peaks between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m., finds another. So you could work out harder then and feel less exerted than in a lower-intensity morning session.

Morning exercisers are more consistent in their fitness habits than those of us (ahem) who try to wedge in later workouts, still other surveys show. But the risk of injury falls with later sessions because our synovial fluid—which lubes our joints and lessens inflammation—works better as the day progresses.

realize they're going to have to get creative to keep up the interest, especially among those who have been in the saddle a long time. Hence the spawning of variations such as group cycling for singles, cycling combined with strength training and yoga and classes with live DJs.

The spin that Gaines put on was just what the new Sports Club/LA facility was looking for. According to fitness manager Jennifer Zerling, the club's emphasis on mind-body workouts (realized in the calming, Zen-inspired design and emphasis on yoga and Pilates) made it a perfect match.

"It's taking your mind out of class and associating with something totally different," she says. "You lose yourself a little bit, and you're relating to the astrological aspects of life. It's a new dimension in the fitness industry."

Confused?

"The best time of day to work out is the time that works for you," says Richard Cotton, chief exercise physiologist at www.myexerciseplan.com and a spokesman for the American Council on Exercise.

The 10 percent morning advantage "doesn't add up to much," Cotton notes, and it will quickly vanish if you choose a schedule you can't keep. Ditto the p.m. injury-prevention edge if you don't exercise it.

If working out at night, note that your heart rate stays elevated for up to three hours, and that may affect your ability to sleep. But some folks find evening exercise relaxes them and helps them sleep better.

Bottom line: Find another excuse, chum.

As the Astro Rev class warms up, the teacher pushes it further. "Let me hear the wheels!" yells Gaines, who boasts a muscled physique, a bald head and an expansive grin that takes up half his face. A whirring white noise of 10 riders fills the room before the pounding dance music drowns it out. "Yes! How's everybody doing? We're going to move this week!"

It is part exercise class, part revival meeting and part chart reading, with Gaines rallying his students by shouting, "Go! Go! Feel the freedom!" and "With Mercury and Saturn present, it's all about speed and climbing. We're going to new heights tonight, so let's do it together!"

The men and women whoop and holler back at Gaines, who directs them to speed up, slow down, stand up, rock back and forth and increase and decrease resistance. Students are

addressed by name: "C'mon, Sam!" he shouts, focusing his attention on a young man in shorts. Gaines extends his arm, moving his fingers as if to draw even more energy out of the cyclist. One student would say later, "It's like he can see inside me. He connects with me."

Fitness has been an interest throughout Gaines' life, astrology a significant part for the last 17 years, ever since he had a reading done that "gave me a real understanding of self." His conversations are peppered with allusions to the charts and the signs of the famous, including Richard Nixon, Aretha Franklin and Ingmar Bergman.

Gaines was working as a bicycle messenger in New York in 1989, wheeling across the Brooklyn Bridge, when he had an epiphany: Combine astrology and cycling, the cycles of the planets and stars, the cycles of life, the cycles of . . . cycles.

But it took a while for everything to gel.

Gaines upgraded to a job in sales and marketing at Showtime in the mid-1990s but quit to head west in 1998 and follow his dream. He started teaching cycling at Crunch in 1999 before starting Astro Rev at Sports Club's Beverly Hills location, and he believes he's the only one doing this combination. He still bikes everywhere, doesn't own a car and seems to have boundless energy. This evening class was his fourth that day.

"I love the vibe and energy he brings to the class," says Alyson Richards, an advertising executive who's been taking Gaines' class since he began teaching at Sports Club. She admits that the "astro" part of the class wasn't exactly a draw. "I normally don't follow astrology," she said, "and I thought it was very L.A. But you can use your filter to determine what you like and don't like about it."

Life & Style

Cecelia Ahern has hit with first novel

By SHAWN POGATCHNIK
AP WRITER

In Ireland, a first-time author is garnering bucketloads of publicity, six-figure deals and Hollywood interest for her new tear-jerker novel. She also happens to be the prime minister's daughter.

Cecelia Ahern, 22, who spent Saturday signing newly minted copies of "PS, I Love You," for several hundred fans at a Dublin bookstore, rejects claims her success is due to the high profile of her father, Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern.

"I think it's very flattering for Dad, actually, to think he has all this influence with Hollywood and all over the world," she said.

She may have a point. The novel has already proved exceptionally attractive to publishers in countries where, as the young author puts it, "the reaction is, 'Bertie who?'"

"PS, I Love You" has been snapped up by publishers in 23 countries, including a \$1 million deal with Hyperion in the United States. Hollywood producer Wendy Finerman, who shared a 1994 Oscar for "Forrest Gump," snapped up the film rights for \$100,000—altogether enough money, Ahern says, for her to buy her first laptop and move out of her mother's house.

Cecelia Ahern's lineage is the buzz

Loyola Univ. blocks 'Vagina Monologues'

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Loyola University has blocked a campus production of Eve Ensler's "The Vagina Monologues," apparently after the Jesuit school's president voiced concerns about the play's language.

Erica Ciccarone, an English major who had planned to stage the play as a fund-raiser for women's groups, said the school president, the Rev. William Byron, made it clear in a meeting last week that the production was off.

Loyola spokeswoman Kristine Lelong confirmed that the play will not be produced on campus. However, Byron said in an interview that he had not decided to quash the play.

"We'll see what happens," he said. "The Vagina Monologues," written by Ensler, was an off-Broadway hit in New York after opening in October 1999. The play explores issues and perceptions related to women's sexual anatomy.

Ensler has allowed her play to be staged on college campuses for fund-raising purposes, and scores of college groups have responded.

Loyola's production had been planned for Valentine's Day as part of a national "V-Day" campaign to stop violence against women. Proceeds would have gone to the Loyola's Women's Issues Organization.



Cecelia Ahern, daughter of Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern, at a book signing for her first book 'PS, I Love You' at Eason's Bookshop, in Dublin, Saturday Jan. 24, 2004.

topic in Dublin, where an initial print run of 50,000 copies has made "PS, I Love You" an immediate best-seller.

The novel tells the story of Holly, a 30-year-old Dubliner whose husband, Gerry, dies unexpectedly of a brain tumor. Holly discovers he has left her 10 sealed envelopes containing monthly tasks Holly must complete or challenges she must face—each designed to help her come to grips with her grief and embrace life again.

Ireland's airwaves and newspapers have devoted unusual space to discussing whether Ahern's work is an exceptional piece of "chick lit."

"Heartbreak, intrigue and love letters from beyond the grave—read that lot on a back cover, and you'll find it hard to put it down," said a review in The Irish Times, Ireland's often-stuffy newspaper of record, which found Ahern's style flawed but "neither syrupy nor stilted, with

promising flashes of humor and a relaxedly bawdy use of expletives."

Other critics have been nastier, quoting particularly wooden bits of dialogue from the novice writer's book. But the level-headed Ahern said her political pedigree means she's tough enough to take it—and she's already written her second novel.

"I grew up seeing people write terrible and untrue things every day about my dad, who works 24-7 in politics and is an amazing man," she said. "So if there is constructive criticism I'm going to take it—if I agree with it. Fortunately, there's nothing I agree with so far!"

Her success story has added a new twist to one of Ireland's longest-running soap operas—the life and loves of Bertie Ahern.

Ahern is Ireland's first prime minister to suffer an openly broken-down marriage. His daughters, Cecelia and Georgina, have remained close to their father but grew up with their mother, Miriam, in a country where divorce was illegal until 1997.

As prime minister since 1997, Ahern traveled across Ireland and the world with his longtime partner, Celia Larkin, at his side, courting criticism from religious conservatives in this overwhelmingly Catholic country. But their relationship fell apart last year. Since then Irish tabloids have speculated about a possible Bertie-Miriam reconciliation.

The Ahern clan also gained in the domestic glamour stakes last year when Georgina married Nicky Byrne, a member of Ireland's best-known boy band, Westlife.

Cecelia Ahern says she has no intention of drawing on her parents' troubles for inspiration in her fiction. "I have an imagination of my own," she said. "There's plenty of ideas floating around up there already."

PASSAGES

Composer, trumpeter Billy May dies at 87

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Billy May, a Grammy-winning composer and trumpeter who arranged such standards as "Cherokee," "Take the A Train" and "Serenade in Blue" and worked with such stars as Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra and Glenn Miller, died at age 87.

May died Thursday of heart failure at his home in San Juan Capistrano, his wife, Doris May, told The Associated Press on Friday.

The musician, who won a Grammy in 1958 for his album "Big Fat Brass," was noted for his brass-heavy, "slurping saxophone" arrangements, but his command of styles extended from swing to the mambo.

He also had a brilliant sense of humor, said satirist Stan Freberg, who collaborated with May on Freberg's Grammy-winning 1961 comedy album "The History of the United

States, Vol. 1," and 1996's Grammy-nominated "History of the United States, Vol. 2."

"I feel like I've lost my musical soul mate," said Freberg, whose albums featured a full swing orchestra with songs written by the satirist but arranged and conducted by May.

In addition to his wife, May is survived by daughters Cynthia May, Laureen Mitchell, Joannie Ransom and Sandra Gregory, and a brother, John.

Dancer Ann Miller dies of cancer at 81

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Ann Miller, the raven-haired, long-legged actress and dancer whose machine-gun taps won her stardom during the golden age of movie musicals, died Thursday of lung cancer. She was 81.

Miller died at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, said Esme Chandlee, her longtime friend and former publicist.

A onetime childhood dance

prodigy, she reached the peak of her film career at MGM in the late 1940s and early '50s with "On the Town," "Easter Parade" and "Kiss Me Kate."

She remained a dazzling tapper in her 60s and earned millions on Broadway and touring with Mickey Rooney in "Sugar Babies," a razzmatazz tribute to the era of burlesque.

"At MGM, I always played the second feminine lead; I was never the star in films," she once recalled. "I was the brassy, good-hearted showgirl. I never really had my big moment on the screen."

"Sugar Babies" gave me the stardom that my soul kind of yearned for."

In later years, she astounded audiences in New York, Las Vegas and on the road with her dynamic tapping in "Sugar Babies" when. The show, starring her and Rooney, opened on Broadway in 1979 and toured for years. In 1990, she commented that "Sugar Babies" had made her financially independent.

By JIM SHEA

The Hartford Courant
Jim Shea can be reached
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A little nip here, a tuck there and new noses, breasts everywhere

I watched a show on cosmetic surgery the other night.

It was either that or the State of the Union address.

I don't remember the name of the show, but in it, people undergo surgery for the sole purpose of making themselves look better.

This one woman had her nose reduced and reshaped. I didn't think her new nose was any better than her old nose, but then who knows?

The truth is that most people don't like their nose. And with good reason. The nose is weirdly shaped, hair-bearing, byproduct-producing and often noisy.

To be honest, I'd be open to getting some work done on the projectile that precedes my face if weren't for the fact that the project would require a team of surgeons, some blasting and heavy equipment.

Anyway, the cosmetic-surgery show was fairly interesting, although nothing you would want to watch while you were eating.

The liposuction was particularly gross. To suck out the fat, the surgeon uses this long, pointy instrument that he jabs in and out of the suckee with the intensity of Norman Bates.

I'll tell you, forget diets. You want motivation to lose weight, slap a photo of liposuction on the fridge.

Now, you'd think that after Michael Jackson, cosmetic surgery might be relegated to, say, a challenge on "Fear Factor." No so.

According to statistics compiled by the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, more than 2 million people underwent cosmetic procedures in 2002.

Leading the list were Botox shots, a process in which a deadly poison is injected into your face to get rid of wrinkles. I mean, you can see why this would be popular.

Another top seller was the basic boob job. In 2002, plastic surgeons performed 225,818 of these procedures.

Note: (The number of new ya-ba-da-ba-dos was offset by 42,855 implant removals, resulting in a net increase of only 182,963 sets of inflated assets.)

Surprisingly, a significant number of men also had breast surgery. But while women were pumping 'em up, almost 9,000 men were undergoing reductions, a procedure that seems totally unnecessary given the invention of the "manssiere" (aka "The Bro").

Other things to know about 2002:

- A total of 9,545 people had ear surgery, which I think is really kind of unnecessary, unless you're Vulcan.

- Another 32,148 had fat injections, which sets you to wondering about how they get a Twinkie in a syringe.

- And 1,388 people had their butts lifted, which I assume doesn't mean stolen.

I'll tell ya, it's a wonder you recognize anyone anymore.

Thriller 'Primer' wins Sundance honor



Actors Zooey Deschanel and Jake Gyllenhaal kick off the show Saturday, Jan. 24, 2004, at the Sundance Film Festival awards show in Park City, Utah. AP

PARK CITY, Utah (AP)—The high-tech thriller "Primer," about two get-rich-quick inventors whose time-travel device complicates their lives, won the top dramatic honor at the Sundance Film Festival.

Sundance jurors gave the documentary grand prize to "DIG!", director Ondi Timoner's portrait of the friendship and rivalry between musicians Anton Newcombe of the Brian Jonestown Massacre and Courtney Taylor of the Dandy Warhols.

Awards were presented Saturday night, with top winners expected to screen one last time Sunday as the 11-day independent film showcase ends.

"Primer"—written and directed by Shane Carruth, who co-stars—won the grand jury prize as well as the festival's Alfred P. Sloane Prize, a \$20,000 cash award for films that showcase science and technology.

The audience award for dramatic films, chosen by Sundance moviegoers, went to "Maria Full of Grace," writer-director Joshua Marston's Spanish-language tale of a young Colombian woman (Catalina Sandino Moreno) in peril after she becomes a "mule" carrying heroin to the United States.

"Born Into Brothels," which examines the hardships endured by impoverished children of prostitutes in Calcutta, won the documentary audience honor. The film was directed by Ross Kauffman and Zana Briski.

The directing prize for dramatic features was given to Debra Granik for "Down to the Bone," her tale of a lower-middle-class wife and mother struggling to kick a cocaine habit. "Down to the Bone" star Vera Farmiga also earned a special jury prize for her performance.

Morgan Spurlock won the documentary directing prize for "Super Size Me," his indictment of the fast-food industry that chronicles the deterioration of his health during a monthlong experiment eating nothing but McDonald's food.

The festival's jurors for drama entries were actors Danny Glover and Maggie Gyllenhaal, director Lisa Cholodenko, producer Ted Hope and cinematographer Frederick Elmes. Serving on the jury for documentaries were filmmakers Rory Kennedy, Robb Moss and Chris Smith, photojournalist Mary Ellen Mark and cinematographer Robert Shepard.

Among other winners:

■ The Waldo Salt Screenwriting Award went to Larry Gross for "We Don't Live Here Anymore," a marital drama starring Mark Ruffalo, Laura Dern, Naomi Watts and Peter Krause.

■ The world-cinema dramatic audience award went to "Seducing Doctor Lewis," a French-language film by Canadian director Jean-Francois Pouliot about a remote fishing village conniving to keep a Montreal doctor in their midst.

■ Another Canadian film, "The Corporation," directors Mark Achbar and Jennifer Abbott's study of the pros and cons of modern corporate structure, won the documentary audience honor for world cinema.

■ Nancy Schreiber won the dramatic cinematography award for "November," a cryptic thriller starring Courteney Cox as a woman experiencing strange visions after a tragedy.

■ Ferne Pearlstein received the documentary cinematography award for "Imelda," chronicling the life of former Philippines first lady Imelda Marcos.

■ The Freedom of Expression Award, given to a documentary that examines social or political issues, went to the Korean film "Repatriation," director Kim Dong-won's exploration of North Korean communist inmates held in South Korea.

■ Special jury prizes were awarded to "Brother to Brother," director Rodney Evans' drama about black gay artists, and "Farmingville," a documentary by Catherine Tambini and Carlos Sandoval about culture clash in a Long Island community with a large migrant-laborer population.

■ The jury prize for short films was shared by "When the Storm Came," directed by Shilpi Gupta, and "Gowanus, Brooklyn," directed by Ryan Fleck. The British film "Tomo," by director Paul Catling, won the international jury prize for short films.

Jewish groups condemn Gibson's 'Passion'

Representatives of two Jewish groups who attended screenings of Mel Gibson's upcoming movie "The Passion of the Christ" said Thursday it contained offensive stereotypes about the Jewish role in the crucifixion.

The American Jewish Committee, which sent its interfaith experts to church screenings in Florida and Illinois, said the movie contained "unnecessary and destructive imagery of Jews" and "represents a disturbing setback" to relations between Jews and Christians.

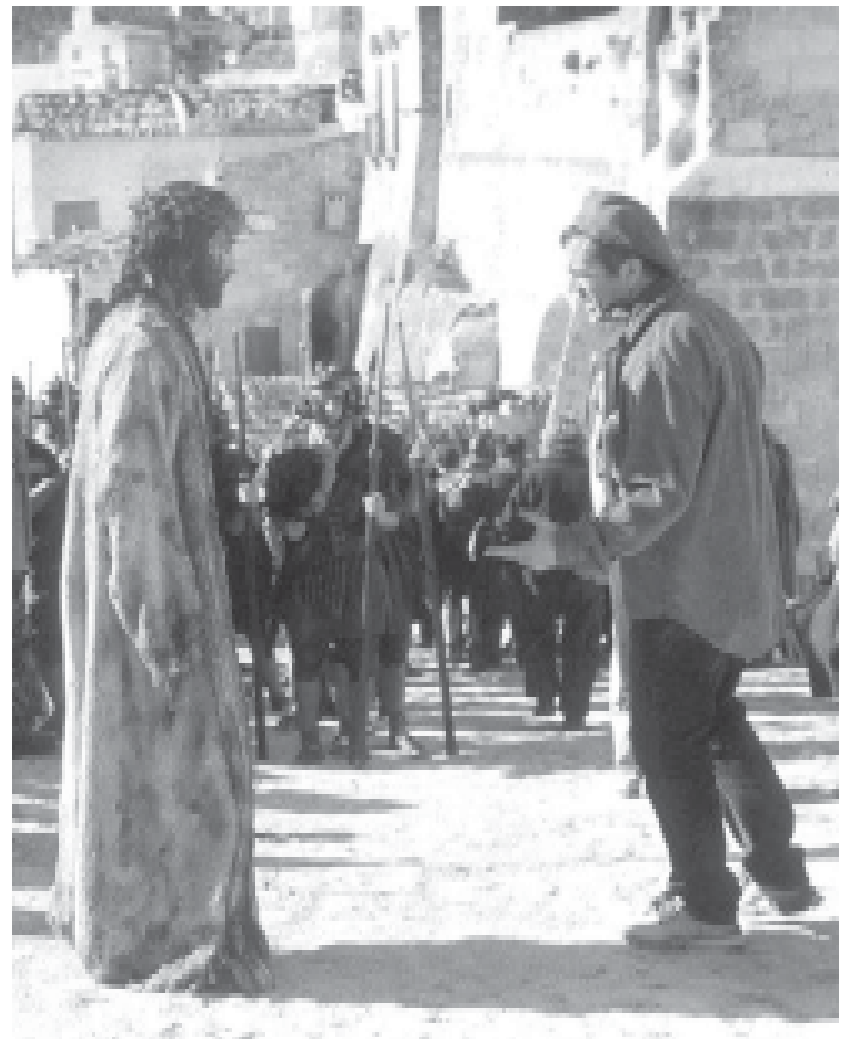
Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, who has accused Gibson of holding anti-Semitic views, saw the film for the first time Wednesday night in Florida. He said it is an "unambiguous portrayal of Jews as being responsible for the death of Jesus."

Gibson, who directed, funded and co-scripted the film, has repeatedly denied that his movie maligns Jews. His spokesman, Alan Nierob, did not immediately respond to a request for comment Thursday.

Jewish groups have been worried that Gibson's script would ignore modern teaching by the Roman Catholic Church and many other denominations that Jews were not collectively responsible for Christ's death. The notion of Jewish guilt fueled anti-Semitism for centuries.

An article about the film in The New Yorker magazine last September indicated Gibson would keep a biblical verse out that upsets Jews and has been used to justify anti-Semitism: "His blood be on us and on our children!" (Matthew 27:25). That verse was not included in a version of the film The Associated Press saw last month.

But Rabbi James Rudin, a longtime interfaith expert for the American



Mel Gibson directs Jim Caviezel on the set of "The Passion" in this Jan. 24, 2003 photo. AP

Golden Globes show is formal, irreverent

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Formal irreverence. That's what the Golden Globes telecast promises viewers each year.

Pack some celebrities into tuxedos and elegant (or not so elegant) dresses, load them into a big room at the Beverly Hilton Hotel, sprinkle liberally with alcohol and—who knows?—maybe Jack Nicholson will moon the crowd.

Hey, it's happened before.

Although the Globes are distributed by the relatively small Hollywood Foreign Press Association (a group of about 90 journalists who cover entertainment for foreign-based media outlets), a winning spot on the nationally televised NBC ceremony is highly coveted.

Many actors and filmmakers use the Globes as a way to pique audience interest in their films and build momentum for the more prestigious Academy Awards, which are voted on by about 5,700 industry figures.

Others just show up for a good time.

"I'm stoked, but I'm pretty disoriented though," Jack Black told The Associated Press when he learned of his best comedy actor nomination for "The School of Rock."

His rivals include Nicholson for "Something's Gotta Give," Johnny Depp for "Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl," Bill Murray for "Lost in Translation" and Billy Bob Thornton for "Bad Santa."

"I was like, 'Who else got nominated?'" Black recalled. "When they told me, it really sounded surreal because those guys—this is nothing new to those guys. I'm definitely the what's-wrong-with-this-picture in that group of actor studs."

Black said that, if he did win, he'd probably play a little air-guitar to the tune of Queen's "We Are the Champions."

"But I'm not counting on that," he said.

"Cold Mountain," about a Civil War deserter whose journey to find his sweetheart is marked by heartbreak and death, led the nominations with eight, including best dramatic film.

another verse from the Gospels. It's a chilling verse because I know, and everyone knows, that that verse is the basis of blood libel."

Elcott said the movie was not anti-Semitic, but called it "inflammatory" instead. And he said he did not anticipate any violence against Jews as a result of the movie.

Teen is ready to disengage from unfulfilling engagement

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

DEAR ABBY: I am 19 and have been with "Mike" for four years. We became engaged a year ago. This is my first and only long-term relationship. Mike is kind, loving and would do anything for me.



Dear Abby

In the beginning I was in love with him, but now I realize that I'm not ready for a serious commitment, especially since I've had no experience dating anyone else. I stopped wearing my engagement ring because I'm not sure I'll ever marry him.

When Mike asked me about the ring, I said, "I bought it, so I can choose when to wear it." (Mike didn't have credit, so we used my credit card, and I make the monthly payments.) I began thinking, "What if?" when another guy I know told me I was cute and asked for my phone number.

I care about Mike and don't want to hurt him, but I'm not in love with him anymore. How can I end this without starting World War III in our families? My parents love him more than they love me, and when he and I argue, I get a guilt trip from them and feel like I have to apologize to him and make everything better.

Sometimes I wish he would break up with me and move out so I don't have to be the one to do it. Mike says I treat him like dirt. Could I be doing it subconsciously? Abby, please help. I want out.

IN OVER MY HEAD

DEAR IN: What Mike is interpreting as being treated like dirt is your effort—conscious or otherwise—to distance yourself from the relationship. It is not abusive to admit that you have made a mistake. The time has come for you to level with Mike and your family, and to tell them plainly that you are not ready for a permanent commitment.

I don't know which of you signed the lease on your dwelling, but the one who didn't should move. And let this be a lesson to you. It appears you were so desperate for commitment from Mike that you were willing to pay for your own engagement ring. So don't blame Mike, and don't blame your parents. You got yourself into this fix, and it's time to accept your responsibility and put things right.

• • • • •

DEAR ABBY: I am a 16-year-old male, and I have this problem telling the truth. I lie mainly about my grades. I am a good student, but I just don't put forth a lot of effort.

I got a progress report the other day and was failing Spanish with a 67. When my dad asked about my grades, I told him I had gotten a 70 in Spanish because that is a passing grade. When he saw the report, he yelled at me. He was disappointed about the grade but even more so about the lie.

I feel comfortable telling my mom the truth because she and I are really close. But I can't seem to tell my dad the truth, ever. I don't know why. I don't know how to stop lying. Please help me, I'm begging you.

PINOCC HIO

DEAR PINOCCHIO: You and your father need to work on your relationship. He doesn't trust you because you lie. You lie because you don't trust him enough to honestly discuss your difficulties. Clip this letter, show it to him and tell him you wrote it. You and your father could both benefit from professional counseling to improve your level of communication and resolve your trust issues.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable—and most frequently requested—poems and essays, send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$5 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

Danson backs Wesley Clark in NH

PORTSMOUTH, N.H. (AP)—The star of "Cheers"—where everybody knows your name—had some trouble Saturday remembering the name of his wife's new television series.

Ted Danson, who played Sam Malone on "Cheers" for 12 seasons, and his wife, actress

Mary Steenburgen, have been campaigning in New Hampshire for retired Army Gen. Wesley Clark.

Introducing his wife at a rally Saturday afternoon, Danson mentioned that she's the star of the movie "Elf" before coming up blank.

"Oh my God, I can't believe this," he said, struggling for a few seconds before blurting out her TV show, "Joan of Arcadia."

"He will soooo pay for that later," Steenburgen said as she took the microphone.

Steenburgen's mother and

Clark's mother were friends and co-workers at an Arkansas bank who used to brag about their children.

"He's not a braggart, that's why his mom had to do it. " Steenburgen said of Clark. "Now that she's not here, that's what I'm for."

Ex-Anna Nicole Smith boyfriend sentenced

LOS ANGELES (AP)—An ex-boyfriend of Anna Nicole Smith was sentenced to nearly seven years in prison for making criminal threats against the former Playboy Playmate and attacking her neighbor, officials said.

Superior Court Judge Kathyne Stoltz rejected Mark Hatten's motion for a new trial on Friday.

"I'm not a bad person. I basically walked away from this fight," Hatten said. "You'll never hear about me bothering Anna Nicole again."

Hatten was convicted last November of making criminal threats against Smith, who testified she had a brief sexual relationship with him in 2000 that ended when he approached her with a knife in her home. Hatten claimed they had an on-again, off-again relationship.

Hatten was also convicted of assault for a fight involving a neighbor who went to Smith's house to persuade Hatten to leave.

Jurors acquitted Hatten of two other counts involving stalking and threats against Smith, 36, who became a reality TV star when "The Anna Nicole Show" began airing on E! Entertainment Television.



AP Anna Nicole Smith poses at the unveiling of her new Times Square billboard ad for Lane Bryant Jeans, New York in this Aug. 8, 2000 file photo.

Paris Hilton stars at Rio fashion show

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil (AP)—Topping the year's worst dressed list hasn't made Paris Hilton any less of a fashion plate. The socialite and reality TV star became a model—and the main attraction of Rio's fashion week—as she strolled the catwalk for local designer Colcci.

She also delayed the show for an hour to cope with hair problems.

"This is my first time in Brazil, in Rio for the fashion show. I'm so exited, the show is amazing," Hilton, who opened and closed the designer's show, told AP Television News.

With most top models staying away from this season's Fashion Rio—the weeklong fashion event ending Saturday—Hilton was the closest thing the event had to a star.

Hilton's visit was talked up in the local press all week and she was mobbed after the show by reporters and fans.

After the show, Hilton headed straight for the airport, but told fans not to fear: "I plan to come back for Carnival."



AP US socialite Paris Hilton presents an outfit by Brazilian designer Colcci during the 2004 Rio Fashion Autumn/Winter collections in Rio de Janeiro, Friday, Jan. 23, 2004.

Ill. adopts Parton library program

PIGEON FORGE, Tenn. (AP)—Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, a program the country singer started to encourage parents to read to their children, has been adopted statewide in Illinois.

Parton launched the program in 1996 for preschool children in Sevier County, a rural community in the Great Smoky Mountains where she grew up. The 58-year-old singer was the first in her family to graduate from high school.

Today, 206 communities in 35 states participate in Imagination Library, but Illinois is the first to promote it statewide.

"I am thrilled Governor (Rod) Blagojevich shares my vision to inspire all children to dream more, learn more, care more and be more," Parton said in a statement. "It's exciting that Illinois wants to join us. Maybe other governors will follow their lead and jump on board. The more the merrier."

Tom Wopat joins 'Chicago' national tour

NEW YORK (AP)—From good ol' boy to slick Chicago lawyer.

Tom Wopat, the star of television's "The Dukes of Hazzard," is joining the national tour of

"Chicago," the Kander and Ebb musical now in its eighth year on Broadway. Wopat takes over



Wopat

the role of shady mouthpiece Billy Flynn from Patrick Swayze. He starts Jan. 27 at the Paramount Theatre in Seattle. The tour then continues to Salt Lake City, Dallas, Phoenix and Miami, with other cities to follow.

Wopat, who starred as Luke Duke on "Hazzard" from 1979-1985, appeared as Frank Butler in the Bernadette Peters revival of "Annie Get Your Gun" and later joined the cast of the current Broadway revival of "42nd Street." The tour of "Chicago" stars Bianca Marroquin as Roxie Hart and Reva Rice as Velma Kelly.

Pastimes

WONDERWORD®
By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD. The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

SCIENCE-FICTION MOVIES

Solution: 12 letters

S	S	T	U	N	T	E	S	C	E	N	A	R	I	O
T	S	O	H	G	G	C	I	S	O	C	E	C	P	H
U	N	B	Y	N	R	T	R	I	K	A	I	I	O	C
D	H	O	A	G	S	E	T	E	N	C	C	O	L	T
I	I	R	I	A	O	C	T	I	A	T	I	T	V	A
O	T	T	T	S	U	L	M	C	U	T	S	R	O	W
S	S	N	B	D	I	A	O	R	A	M	U	A	T	R
H	A	E	O	U	V	E	N	F	R	G	R	C	Y	
F	T	R	P	I	D	U	E	U	H	N	A	T	E	R
E	P	Y	O	M	S	G	T	L	I	C	R	H	L	O
W	I	N	M	A	A	U	E	L	E	R	E	A	C	T
E	R	N	E	G	R	D	L	T	O	T	U	T	S	
I	C	S	P	E	C	I	A	L	A	S	C	E	N	E
V	S	Ⓞ	Ⓡ	Ⓢ	Ⓢ	Ⓢ	Ⓢ	Ⓢ	Ⓢ	Ⓢ	Ⓢ	Ⓢ	Ⓢ	
S	S	E	C	C	U	S	D	V	T	C	E	F	F	E

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Actor, Adapt, Alien, Animation, Best, Budget, Cast, Character, Chilling, Creature, Effect, Fans, Fantastic, Future, Genre, Ghost, Hero, Hits, Illusion, Image, Myth, Picture, Production, Rent, Robot, Roles, Scenario, Scene, Script, Special, Story, Strange, Studio, Stunt, Success, Tape, Technology, Television, Tricks, View, Visual, Voice, Watch.

Last Saturday's Answer: Las Vegas

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CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Baby's second word?

5 Sass

8 Construction timber

12 Stretch out

14 — podrida

15 Meryl Streep movie

16 Dinner for Dobbin

17 — Miserables

18 Start of a JFK quote

20 Standish stand-in

23 — B'rith

24 Air for a pair

25 Withdraw

28 Reggae-like music

29 Meryl Streep movie

30 Heavy weight

32 Native to a specific location

34 Base-runner's goal

35 North Sea feeder

36 Small band

37 Bogart co-star

40 Speck

41 Dumb-struck

42 Meryl Streep movie

47 Weevil's target

48 Pest

49 Partner

50 Comprehend

51 Santa's runaway

3 100 cts.

4 Short sock

5 Myanmar neighbor

6 O.J. trial judge

7 Like a know-it-all

8 Bet middler?

9 Vivacity

10 Sax range

11 Sail support

13 Verdon of Broadway

19 Actress Gilbert

20 Billboards

21 Yoda's student

22 Campus VIP

23 Prove untrue

25 Like thunder

26 Teensy bit

27 Grant's is famous

29 Become a colloid

31 Ultra-modernist

33 Fatal

34 Actual conflict

36 One side of a debate

37 See 2-Down

38 MP's quarry

39 Honeycomb section

40 Porter's "Let's —"

43 Regret

44 Rock producer Brian

45 "Foucault's Pendulum" author

46 Dict. information

Solution time: 24 mins.

SATURDAY'S ANSWER 1-26

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
12				13				14			
15								16			
			17				18	19			
20	21	22				23					
24					25				26	27	
28				29					30	31	
	32		33					34			
				35				36			
37	38	39				40					
41					42	43			44	45	46
47					48						
49					50				51		

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY
Paul Newman, Wayne Gretzky, Ellen DeGeneres, Eddie Van Halen

HAPPY BIRTHDAY: Focus on whatever task is at hand and don't let trivial matters get you all worked up. If you can harness your energy and put your ideas into play, you can and will make headway. Know in your heart that you are capable of doing great things and you will surpass even your expectations. Your numbers are 2, 11, 19, 25, 36, 45

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ARIES (March 21-April 19)
If you don't channel your energy, you may become anxious and easily upset. Set your mind on doing, not stewing, and if you master that, you will make the progress you seek. ☺☺☺



TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
Problems with authority figures or superiors will leave you feeling cold. Try to do everything by the book and refuse to let anyone drag you into something that you don't feel is right for you. ☺☺☺



GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
Take the straightforward approach to things today. Your funds may be limited; this is the time to offer a helping hand, not your cash. ☺☺☺☺



CANCER (June 21-July 22)
Don't start talking about personal issues today. You may face some awkward moments if you have to deal with someone who is in a higher position than you. Accept the changes that occur. ☺☺



LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
et involved in something you find competitive. The more you test your skills, the more confident you will become. Prepare to take advantage of your loving mood today. ☺☺☺☺☺



VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
Expect to face some financial setbacks if you get involved in an organization that wants you to make a contribution. Your ability to be responsible and practical will be appreciated by someone you help today. ☺☺☺



LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
Expect to face some upset if you are dealing with a partner. You aren't likely to see things in the same way. Don't let anyone take advantage of you no matter how much you care. ☺☺



SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
Someone you know through work will be pushing to move things along too fast. Use your own judgment and don't give in to the pressure. ☺☺☺



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
Get involved in a social event that is a little out of the ordinary. Job changes look promising, so don't hesitate to set up interviews. ☺☺☺☺☺



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
Don't let a minor mistake or occurrence stop you from following your dream. Someone close to you may try to discourage you from doing what you've always wanted to do. ☺☺



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
Opportunities for romance will arise if you get involved in an organization with values that fit your criteria. Your generosity will pay off. ☺☺☺☺



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
Gambling of any kind will lead to problems. Make sure you help the people to whom you have a responsibility. The possibility of losing your wallet or a piece of jewelry is likely. ☺☺☺

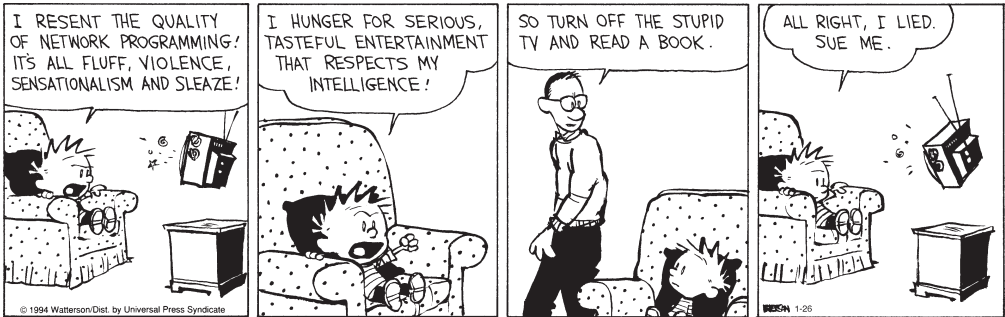
BIRTHDAY BABY: You are a powerful, determined individual who wants to make the most of your life. You are smart, in tune with what is going on around you and set in your ways. You will not give up or back down.

(Need advice? Check out Eugenia on the Web at www.astroadvice.com or www.eugenialast.com.)

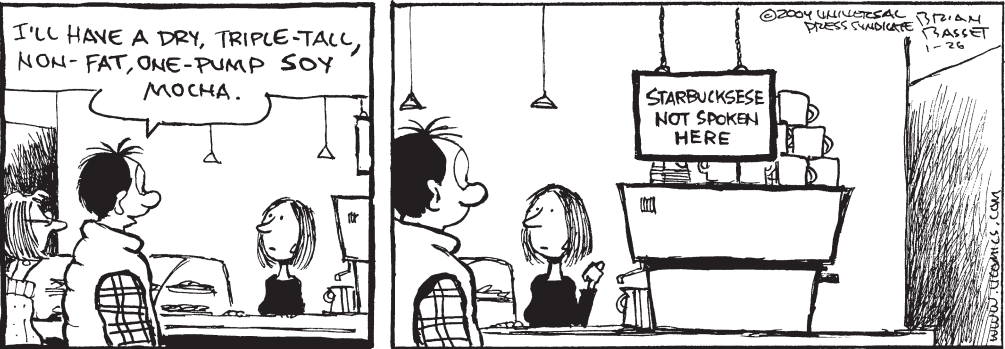
Ziggy®



Calvin and Hobbes



Adam@home



Garfield®

by Jim Davis



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



Team Standings		
Group A		
SIP-Verizon	4	0
Bayani	2	2
SMF	2	2
CCA	2	2
MDX	0	4
Group B		
Visminda	4	1
Cabalen	4	1
Mobil-LIPS	4	1
Bicol	1	3
MIFICPA	1	3
Samahang Laguna	0	5



Team	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	T
Yankees	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	1	7
Academy	0	0	2	0	1	1	1	2	1	8

SPORTS BRIEFS

Kwame Brown leads Wizards past Pacers



WASHINGTON (AP)—Kwame Brown had a career-high 25 points and nine rebounds Saturday as the Washington Wizards shot 63 percent in the first half and held on to beat the Indiana Pacers 107-96.

"It's coming together," said Brown, the top pick straight out of high school in the 2001 draft. "I'm a lot more comfortable. Not as jittery, taking my shots when I have it."

Brown made eight of 12 shots, nine of 10 free throws and had the better in a matchup against fellow straight-out-of-high-schoolers Jermaine O'Neal and Al Harrington. Brown, who has struggled for consistency over much of his career, is averaging 13 points and 7.8 rebounds over his last 11 games.

"Let's see some consistency," Washington coach Eddie Jordan said. "We're not going to gloat. We love what happened tonight. We're not going to say he's arrived, because it's all about consistency."

Steve Blake added a career-high 18 points for the Wizards, who never trailed and have won three of four.

Harrington scored 21 points for the Pacers, who were done in by poor outside shooting as they lost their second game in as many nights following a five-game winning streak. Indiana was 1-for-14 from 3-point range at one point in the fourth quarter and finished 5-for-22.

Warriors 105, Trail Blazers 87

In Portland, Oregon, Jason Richardson scored 31 points, including seven 3-pointers as Golden State beat Portland to end a 12-game road losing streak.

Erick Dampier added 20 rebounds and 18 points, and Speedy Claxton had 15 points, seven assists and five steals.

Zach Randolph had 23 points and seven rebounds for the Trail Blazers, while Rasheed Wallace added 13 points and nine rebounds.

Darius Miles played for the first time since being traded to the Trail



Blazers by Cleveland for guard Jeff McInnis and center Ruben Boumtje Boumtje. Miles scored 12 points in 20 minutes.

Heat 85, Knicks 77

In New York, Eddie Jones scored 26 points and added six assists as Miami handed New York its first loss at Madison Square Garden under coach Lenny Wilkens.

Lamar Odom had 19 points, nine rebounds and five assists, and Caron Butler scored 17 for the Heat as they avenged two lopsided losses to the Knicks earlier this season.

Michael Doleac scored 18 and Penny Hardaway 16 for the Knicks, whose reserves outscored their starters 39-38. Doleac and Hardaway each played 32 minutes while Keith Van Horn played 26 and Houston 23.

Cavaliers 95, 76ers 87

In Cleveland, Eric Williams scored 20 points, Dajuan Wagner added 17 and Cleveland finally slowed down Philadelphia star Allen Iverson in the fourth quarter.

Carlos Boozer had 15 points and 15 rebounds as the Cavs improved to 2-1 without rookie star LeBron James, who missed his third straight game with a sprained right ankle.

Iverson scored 32 points—21 in the third.

Glenn Robinson had 20 points for the injury-riddled Sixers, who have lost six of eight.

Hornets 98, Spurs 96

In San Antonio, Darrell Armstrong capped a season-high 35-point performance by hitting a 3-pointer from 9-meters (25 feet) with a second left to lead New Orleans to a come-from-behind victory over San Antonio.

Armstrong finished 11-for-21 from the field and was a perfect 9-for-9 from

Washington Wizards' Etan Thomas (36) scores on Indiana Pacers' Jermaine O'Neal, behind, during the first quarter Saturday, Jan. 24, 2004, in Washington. AP

the free throw line. He also nailed an 18-meter (53-foot) basket with a second left in the first half to close the Spurs' lead to 52-41.

The Spurs took an 18-point lead with five minutes left in the third, going up 69-51 after Tim Duncan dunked off an alley-oop pass from Manu Ginobili before New Orleans came back behind Armstrong.

Malik Rose led the Spurs with 20 points.

Lakers 93, Jazz 86

In Salt Lake City, Kobe Bryant returned from the injured list and scored 21 points to help the Los Angeles Lakers beat Utah to snap a nine-game road losing streak.

Bryant missed six games because of a sprained right shoulder. He felt good during the team shootaround earlier in the day and was activated.

Slava Medvedenko of the Ukraine tied his career high with 26 points for the Lakers, who let a 19-point lead slip to three twice before sealing their first road win since a 114-103 victory over Dallas on Dec. 4.

DeShawn Stevenson led Utah with 17 points.

SuperSonics 102, Clippers 97

In Seattle, Ray Allen scored 17 of his 41 points in the fourth quarter as Seattle took advantage of the Los Angeles Clippers' 4-for-19 3-point shooting.

The Sonics beat the Clippers for the third straight time this season, following two season-opening wins over Los Angeles in Japan in October.

Allen shot 14-for-23, including 6-for-10 from 3-point range, in finishing one point shy of his season best. Rashard Lewis, who had a career-high 50 points against the Clippers in the second game in Japan, added 15 points and Antonio Daniels came off the bench to score 14 for the Sonics.

The Clippers got 26 points and 16 rebounds from Elton Brand, 25 points and 10 rebounds from Maggette and 22 points from Quentin Richardson.

Mickelson, Triplett share Bob Hope lead

By **KEN PETERS**
AP SPORTS WRITER



LA QUINTA, Calif.

(AP)—Kirk Triplett shot a 9-under 63 Saturday, remaining bogey-free in the Bob Hope Chrysler Classic and tying Phil Mickelson for the lead at 26 under.

Triplett has 24 birdies, an eagle and 47 pars through 72 holes in the 90-hole tournament. Mickelson, making his 2004 debut, shot a 67 at Bermuda Dunes but still saw his two-shot lead evaporate. He won the Hope in 2002.

Kenny Perry, the 1995 champion, had consecutive eagles in his second 64 of the tournament and was one shot behind the co-leaders at 25-under 263.

Triplett who won the Reno-Tahoe Open last year for his second tour victory, holed a bunker shot for an eagle on No. 5 at Indian Wells Country Club, and made a twisting 20-foot birdie putt on No. 11 to highlight his fourth round.

John Daly had a rare double eagle on No. 2 at PGA West. Daly holed his second shot from 220 yards on the 514-

yard par 5. He finished the round with a 72 and was 15 under.

Jay Haas, the 1988 champion and runner-up to Mike Weir a year ago, was two shots off the pace after a 67.

Perry gained four strokes to par with his consecutive eagles on the par-5 fifth and sixth holes at La Quinta Country Club.

He hit a 4-iron that stopped 12 feet past the hole on the 516-yard No. 5 and drilled the putt.

He hit another fine approach, a 3-iron from 229 yards on the 527-yard sixth hole. He curved the ball to the right and around a bunker, and the ball rolled within 8 feet. He sank that putt to pick up four shots in two holes and go to 24 under at that point.

Perry acknowledged the applause from the gallery with a wave, and shook his head, grinning.

Five others, including 2000 winner Jesper Parnevik at 266, were within four shots of the leaders.

Mickelson, making his 2004 debut and looking for his first win in 18 months, was somewhat inconsistent during his fourth round - ranging from

a 40-foot birdie putt that he snaked into the hole to a drive into the water and a bogey on No. 10.

By comparison to Triplett's zero bogeys, Mickelson had four bogeys through the first 72 holes.

The first four rounds of the Hope are played as a pro-am on four courses, with the players alternating daily. The field was cut to the low-scoring 70 pros and ties for the final round at PGA West.

It took a 72-hole score of 277 - 11 under - or better to make the cut.

Scores traditionally are very low, with the desert courses relatively easy, and most of the par 5s reachable in two shots. Weir won at 30-under 330 last year, Mickelson also was 30 under a year earlier when he won a playoff with David Berganio Jr., and Joe Durant set a tour record for a 90-hole tournament with a 36-under 324 in 2001.

Phil Mickelson watches his drive from the 13th tee box Saturday, Jan. 24, 2004 at the Bermuda Dunes Country Club in Palm Desert, Calif., during the fourth round of the Bob Hope Chrysler tournament. AP



SPORTS BRIEFS

Table tennis singles tourney tomorrow

The Marianas Amateur Table Tennis Association is inviting the public to join the 2004 MATTA Open Singles Table Tennis Tournament.

The tournament will begin tomorrow and will continue throughout the rest of the month. It will be held Tuesday and Thursday nights at the multi-purpose room of the Gilbert C. Ada Ada Gymnasium.

The tournament format will be round-robin type of competition for the initial round where each participant will play all the other members of their division once.

Those who win the most games will move on to the elimination phase and playoffs.

Admission fee for the tournament will be \$10 per participant. Trophies will be presented to the winners of their respective divisions during an after-tournament dinner.

Children who wish to participate should inform their parents and ask for their consent. For more information please call Steve Lim at 483-7842.

21st Island Relay set for Dec. 28

Officials of the 21st Annual Christmas Island Relay announced that this year's 13.7-mile team event is set to take place during the early morning hours of December 28.

The starting point of the course will be at the Pacific Islands Club south parking lot. Participants will then head north and work their way to the finish line at the Last Command Post in Marpi.

Interested teams may register at the starting point of the race, which will be at the Pacific Islands Club south parking lot in San Antonio. Registration begins at 5:15am.

Each team, which consists of five members, must switch runners every mile. It is also required that each team has at least one female participant or a participant who is under the age of 16 or in the senior division. Prior to competing, all teams must pay a fee of \$25.

For more information about the 21st Annual Christmas Island Relay, please contact Elias Rangamar at 234-1001 or 1002.

Budweiser Cup on Jan. 12

Officials of the much-awaited Basketball Association of the Northern Mariana Islands Budweiser Cup have decided to push back the kick of date of the 2003 island-wide men's basketball season to January 12 of next year.

So far, 10 teams have shown interest in participating in the league. Only eight, however, are confirmed to battle for the championship crown and the \$1,000 grand prize that goes along with it. Also at stake are the \$300 prize for the runner-up and the \$200 award for the second runner-up.

Each team interested in taking part in the season is required to pay an entrance fee of \$900 that must be payable to BANMI.

Aside from the prizes awarded to the top three finishers, other prizes may be claimed through a half-court shot competition and a three-point contest.

For more information, please contact Rangamar at 664-2500 or Abner Venus at 234-5911.

SPG Council launches logo contest

The South Pacific Games Council Executive Board has announced that it will be selecting a new logo for the SPG Council. The winning logo will be selected from designs submitted through the national sports federations represented on the Council.

The contest is open to everyone. The general public is invited to submit design proposals. The Northern Marianas Amateur Sports Association will select one or more of the designs submitted to it, for transmission to the SPG Council.

All entries should be submitted to NMASA President Michael A. White. The selection of a new design will take place at the SPG Council assembly in Palau next year.

For further information, please contact White at telephone 234-6547.

Sequioco tops Tuesday pool

By MARK RABAGO
REPORTER



Boyet Sequioco put together another perfect run last Tuesday to win the Round Two 8-Ball Fun Tournament that evening at the pioneering sports bar.

The Olango, Zambales native triumphed three straight times after getting a bye in the opening round then turned back a courageous effort by Ike Celis to win the Tuesday 8-ball plum.

Sequioco first victimized Cherish Reyes in the second round before getting the better of Celis in the next round. He then slammed perennial pool winner Manny Mariano in the winners' bracket final to secure the first finals berth and the all-important twice-to-beat advantage.

Celis, for his part, had to work double time after being relegated to losers' bracket play by the crafty Sequioco.

The silver-haired Celis rebounded quickly and nicely by first beating Round Two owner Don Pangelinan. He then eliminated top lady player Rosemarie Moses-Arnold before moving on to the losers' bracket final opposite Mariano.

The outing against Mariano was where Celis truly shone, as the veteran pool player shocked the Filipino cue artist and



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left: Third place Manny Mariano, Round Two 8-Ball Fun Tournament champion Boyet Sequioco, and runner-up Ike Celis.

arranged a championship round meeting with third round conqueror Sequioco.

Unfortunately for Celis his sparkling run apparently ran out in the deciding match against Sequioco, allowing the Hafa Adai security guard to come away with the weekly pool title. He won a handsome trophy and the \$40 top prize for his efforts.

Celis settled for the \$25 runner-up purse, while Mariano took home the \$15 third place

prize. All three men also got souvenir caps from Pacific Trading Co.

Other billiard players that graced the Tuesday 8-ball competition were Gary Ridley, Lars and Palacios.

The Round Two 8-Ball Tournament is held every Tuesday starting at 8pm and has an entry fee of \$10.

Round Two also regularly hosts two other pool tournaments through the course

of the week. Its winner-take-all pool tournament is held every Sunday starting at 1pm and costs \$5 to join.

On Thursdays, Round Two holds the exciting Miller Lite Invitational 8-Ball Tournament starting at 8pm. Entry fee is \$15 on regular days but goes up to \$25 every last Thursday of the month.

For more information on Round Two's tournaments, please contact Don Pangelinan at 234-6930.

ROCBALL

From Page 28

WATTS, wrote that that the program, which features shows on different sports from around the world, would like to attain footage, pictures, and information of Rocball for airing.

Feger also confirmed that he will send a couple of videotapes, information about the history of the sport, rules, and several articles and news clippings to Chimienti.

Eurosport reaches over 95 million homes in 54 countries.

Also being attracted to the sport is Brian Meredith, an operation manager for CrackerJax, a sports-theme

amusement park in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Meredith stated in his letter to Feger that he is currently searching for ways to make their three volleyball courts useful, and was intrigued after coming across some information about Rocball while browsing through the Internet.

Meredith added that he is trying to modify the courts to Rocball standards and is working towards starting a Rocball league.

"I can't believe that nobody in America plays this sport," Meredith stated.

Last year, Feger scheduled a special match featuring 2001 and 2002 champions DX and Jammers, which was taped and

sent to the Fox Sports Show "You Gotta See This." Fox Sports Show's Associate Producer Eric Hopkins expressed his interest in the sport. Camera crews were set up at courtside and on the roof of the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

He also sent a couple of videotapes, written information, and graphics to the Rocball Federation of India.

In related news, the World Organized Rocball Inter-scholastic and Community League's 2004 season is set to get underway on January 12.

Teams will engage in several practice rounds prior to seeing battle in the preliminary rounds, which is expected to kick off just

a couple of weeks later.

All interested players are encouraged to begin organizing squads for the league, which unlike other sporting events, doesn't require an entrance fee.

All matches will be played at the Marianas High School Green Court. Should Mother Nature interrupt with wet showers, matches will be played at the school's gym.

Feger began organizing and writing about the sport while in Japan in 1979. After two years of experimenting, the sport finally progressed into a tournament in 1983.

For more information, please contact Feger at 664-3810 or 288-8722.

LOVE

From Page 28

on the next two holes, then easily reached the par-5 11th with a 5-iron to set up his fourth straight birdie.

"I had my pompoms out, cheering him on," Woods said. "I told him on the 10th tee I was two ahead. He said, 'How's that?' I told him I was getting a stroke a hole."

Love smiled when asked about Woods' comments.

"I didn't want to stick my hand in the cage and ask him if he wanted strokes," Love said.

Indeed, Love put seven shots between him and Woods over the first nine holes, and it left himself in great position to become the

first repeat winner of the Target World Challenge since Woods created it five years ago.

Love won in 2000 with a 64 in the final round.

It would be a great way to end his best season on tour. Love won four times, and no victory bigger than his final-round 64 at The Players Championship on a cold, windy day at Sawgrass.

While this tournament only counts in the bank - \$1.2 million of the \$5 million purse going to the winner - a victory would be meaningful coming against a 16-man field of high-ranked players and three of the four major champions.

Plus, Love has played the last two rounds with Woods, a

situation that in the past hasn't allowed him to play his best.

Love has worked all year to worry about only his own game. In fact, he was having dinner with friends Friday night when they told him to beat Woods.

"K.J. is the guy to beat right now," Love said. "People don't see it the way we do. You've got to beat the golf course."

Harrington missed a 3-foot par putt on the final hole for a 70 and was in third place at 211, six shots behind. Masters champion Mike Weir, who opened with a 75, had a 3-under 69 and was at 212.

Choi is making his first appearance in the final event of the year, and would like nothing

better to end his season with a victory - even though it doesn't count in the record books and won't get him back to Kapalua.

"It would be even better ... because of the field," Choi said.

Catching up to Love could require a great round, especially the way Love is playing. The calm, warmer conditions allowed the ball to travel farther and the power hitters to play more aggressively.

Love's only bogey came on a three-putt from 15 feet, when his eyes saw only the hole and not the speed of the putt; he ran it 8 feet by and missed the par putt.

"Other than that, I felt like I could make birdie on every hole," Love said. "And I almost did."

IT'S CABALEN

From Page 28

fouling out.

In the first game, the UFO All-Stars finally notched a win after beating Bicol Express-RNV Construction 53-44.

First Game

UFO All-Stars 53—Mendiola 20, Malasarte 13, Pardinan 10, Gatdula 6, Canedo 4.

Bicol-RNV Construction 44—Jugos 15, Aldan 10, Abadilla 6,

Lopez 6, Miday 5, Mumar 2.

Second Game

Cabalen-RP Construction 121—Mendoza 25, Delos Reyes 35, Ocampo 13, Alipio 12, Arnedo 12, Jo. Gatdula 6, Magcalas 5, Sinca 3, Barbo 2.

SIP-Verizon 103—R. Alegre 19, Mendoza 18, Guiab 14, Factor 13, Rapanut 13, Villacrusis 9, T. Alegre 7, Tamondong 5, Flores 3, Garcia 2.

Scoring by quarters: 24-27, 59-50, 90-79, 121-103.



Trail Blazers defeat the Lakers, 112-108

Damon Stoudamire hit two 3-pointers in the final minutes and the Portland Trail Blazers handed the Los Angeles Lakers their second loss in two nights with a 112-108 victory Saturday night.

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Saipan Tribune Sports

Sequioco tops Tuesday pool

Boyet Sequioco put together another perfect run last Tuesday to win the Round Two 8-Ball Fun Tournament that evening at the pioneering sports bar.

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28 MONDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2003

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

It's Cabalen against Visminda

By MARK RABAGO
REPORTER

RP Construction dethrones SIP, 121-103

Cabalen-RP Construction reaffirmed their mastery over SIP-Verizon dethroning the three-time defending champion with a 121-103 rout Sunday night that secured them a finals ticket opposite Visminda-Country House in the 2003 UFO Miller Lite Cup championship.

The Transamerica-backed squad atoned for a shaky start, which had them trail SIP-Verizon 27-24 after the opening quarter, with a terrific second quarter.

Big man Ronald Delos Reyes, the goat in Cabalen's 103-108 loss to Visminda last week, came back strong and hit a couple of triples in the second stanza to start the fireworks for Cabalen.

Youthful center Ryan Mendoza, meanwhile, complemented Delos Reyes' sharpshooting ways by scoring 12 points from point blank range also in the second quarter.

The combination of efficient outside shooting and strong inside play translated to a 59-50 halftime advantage for Cabalen.

SIP-Verizon, whose players

came in late due to a mix-up in scheduling, continued to take on water and struggled mightily in the second half.

Cabalen's aggressive game had their opponents on the defensive during the early part of the third period. Another 3-pointer by Delos Reyes at the 8:03 mark of the quarter gave Cabalen its biggest lead so far at 68-54.

A few plays later, Mendoza struck again on the inside to pad their edge further at 72-54 with 6:47 remaining in the period.

Following a putback by Delos Reyes on a miss free throw off a 3-point opportunity by Mendoza, the score stood at 89-68 with less than two minutes left in the third.

But SIP-Verizon was far from gone and retaliated with an 11-3 burst to close the quarter that cut their deficit to 90-79.

Cabalen's Mendoza also chipped in to SIP-Verizon's cause, inadvertently making a layup on SIP-Verizon's basket after an inbound play following a timeout with 31 ticks to go.

The big end-game rally, however, didn't materialize for SIP-Verizon as Cabalen

thwarted all attempts at an uprising and maintained their healthy lead all throughout the final quarter.

There were still a lot of scary moments though. With Cabalen up 96-84, SIP-Verizon forward Gary Rapanut missed a routine layup that could've cut the lead to 10 points.

At the 5:31 mark of the game Edsel Mendoza missed two tries from the free throw line and in the succeeding SIP-Verizon offensive, newly arrived Leo Factor missed the bonus free throw on a 3-point play that could've slashed Cabalen's lead again to 10 points.

With SIP-Verizon still within striking distance swingman Junar Guiab was hit with his fifth personal foul with 4:05 to go. Shortly after Factor followed him to the showers.

Playing-coach Rick Alegre's coast-to-coast layup made it 108-97 with 2:52 left in the game but that appeared to be SIP-Verizon's last gasp as Cabalen went on a 9-2 tear highlighted by an off-balanced 3-point play

by Randy Arnedo that, for all intents and purpose, sealed the game at 117-99 with 1:33 remaining.

Mendoza earned Miller Lite MVP of the Game honors after scoring

35 points, which was the same output submitted by Delos Reyes. Veterans Alex Ocampo, Jun Alipio added 13 and 12 points, respectively.

Rick Alegre topscored for SIP-Verizon with 19 points. Edsel Mendoza chipped in 16 points and Guiab 14 before

See IT'S CABALEN on Page 27



Rocball gains interest yet again

By SHAN SEMAN
REPORTER



Saipan's very own sport, Rocball, is steadily gaining more interest from the outside world.

This was learned late last week after founder and organizer James Feger announced that he has received e-mails from a couple organizations, Eurosport TV and a sports amusement park in Arizona, interested in gaining more information about the sport.

Eurosport, the most widely available sports channel in Europe, has made contact with Feger and has shown interest in learning more about the sport for future broadcasting.

In an e-mail letter to Feger, Pablo Chimienti of Eurosport's weekly program

See ROCBALL on Page 27

Love pulls away from Tiger at Sherwood

By DOUG FERGUSON
AP GOLF WRITER



THOUSAND OAKS, Calif. (AP)—Davis Love III made four straight birdies to leave Tiger Woods in the dust and pull away from a world-class field Saturday, finishing with a 9-under 63 to build a three-shot lead in the Target World Challenge.

Despite a bogey on the par-3 17th, Love tied the tournament record set last year by Pádraig Harrington in the third round. Harrington built a record six-shot lead and hung on to win against Woods.

Love, at 11-under 205, only had a three-shot margin over K.J. Choi (65), although he won't have to worry about Woods.

As most of the leaders were posting birdies on a sunny, benign afternoon at Sherwood, the tournament host gave up ground with a three-putt bogey



Tiger Woods reacts to his approach shot on the 18th hole during the third round of the Target World Challenge, Saturday, Dec. 13, 2003, in Thousand Oaks, Calif.

on No. 3 and then hit his tee shot into the water for a bogey on the next hole.

Woods lost all hope on the final hole, hitting off the pine

straw and coming up well short, into the water, and he had to make a 15-footer for bogey. He had a 72 and was nine shots back at 214.

Meanwhile, Love played some of his best golf since early in the year. "I was confident all day," Love said. "I'm getting more and more comfortable playing with Tiger and around the lead."

Love was tied with Choi and Justin Leonard when his 4-iron on the difficult par-3 8th climbed just enough to hop into the fringe and stop about 6 feet above the hole for one of only two birdies in the round.

Love holed putts of 20 feet and 15 feet for birdies

See LOVE on Page 27

